INFINITY FOUNDATION INDIA

Reclaiming Sanskrit Studies

Western Indology & Its Quest for Power

Proceedings of Swadeshi Indology Conference Series

(Ed.) Dr. K.S. Kannan

Infinity Foundation India

Few Indologists have been able to decipher the nuances of American Orientalism that surpasses Macaulayism in its virulence. In its unrelenting quest to comprehend and digest India's intellectual traditions, Western academia has perpetuated the erstwhile colonialism, only adding newer dimensions to the agenda.

In the past, only a few men of insight like Ananda Coomaraswamy and Edward Said have been able to see through the Western agenda. The modus operandi of the cabal of Western academics, whose avowed objective is secessionism, is being laid threadbare in the well-researched incisive writings of Rajiv Malhotra.

In this volume, eight scholars have sought to expose the deliberate distortions of the most formidable representative of American Orientalism viz. Prof. Sheldon Pollock of Columbia University, for whom Sanskrit is "dead", and is yet a powerful abettor of German Nazism!

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2017

Reclaiming Sanskrit Studies
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Transliteration Scheme

a	अ	ā	आ	i	इ	ī	ई
u	उ	ū	ऊ	ṛ	ऋ	ṝ	ॠ
lṛ	ऌ						
e	ए	ai	ऐ	o	ओ	au	औ
ṁ	ं	ḥ	:				

k	क्	kh	ख्	g	ग्	gh	घ्	ṅ	ङ्
c	च्	ch	छ्	j	ज्	jh	झ्	ñ	ञ्
ṭ	ट्	ṭh	ठ्	ḍ	ड्	ḍh	ढ्	ṇ	ण्
t	त्	th	थ्	d	द्	dh	ध्	n	न्
p	प्	ph	फ्	b	ब्	bh	भ्	m	म्

y	य्	r	र्	l	ल्	v	व्
ś	श्	ṣ	ष्	s	स्	h	ह्
kṣa	क्ष	jña	ज्ञ				

About Infinity Foundation India

INFINITY
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INDIA

॥ इच्छन्ति देवाः सुन्वन्तं
न स्वप्नाय स्पृहयन्ति ॥

"The *deva*-s love the performer of *yajña*,
not the one who slumbers" — *Ṛgveda* 8.2.18

Infinity Foundation (IF), USA, has a 25-year track record of mapping the Kurukshetra in the field of Indology, and producing game-changing original research *using the Indian lens* to study India and the world.

One of the goals of **Infinity Foundation India (IFI)**, an offspring of IF, in organising Swadeshi Indology Conference Series is — to develop, fund, and groom scholars who can methodically respond to the Western worldview of Indology.

We are proud to say that within one year of the birth of the Swadeshi Indology Conference Series, we have conducted two high impact conferences with quality output for publications, as well as two impressive monographs. These monographs will be published and distributed in academia worldwide. They will be used in platforms for academic debate by our scholars.

We have begun to build a team of young scholars with *swadeshi drishti*. Our mission is to build a home team of 108 scholars who will form the basis for developing a civilizational grand narrative of India.

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Our Key Partners

The organisers of the conference are indebted to the various institutions and individuals for the invaluable help rendered by them, without which this work would just not have been possible. It is a pleasure to thank them heartily for the same.

We are indebted to our individual and institutional sponsors: Sri Mohandas Pai and Foundation for Indian Civilization Studies, Sri MV Subbiah and Vellayan Chettiar Trust, Sri J K Jhaver, Sri Kiron Shah, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Sri Rakesh Bhandari, and Sri Nagesh Bhandari and Indus University. Without all their financial support and help we would not have been able to attract the high level of scholarship that has contributed to this volume.

We are grateful to IIT-Madras and IGNCA, New Delhi for organizing the Swadeshi Indology Conferences 1 and 2 respectively. In particular, we are thankful to Prof. Devendra Jalihal and his colleagues at IITM, Sri Ram Bahadur Rai, Chairman IGNCA, Sri Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary IGNCA, Sri Aravinda Rao, Smt. Sonal Mansingh and their team at IGNCA. The teams at these institutions put in enormous efforts to make the conferences a success and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude for the same.

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Series Editorial

It is a tragedy that many among even the conscientious Hindu scholars of Sanskrit and Hinduism still harp on Macaulay, and ignore others while accounting for the ills of the current Indian education system, and the consequent erosion of Hindu values in the Indian psyche. Of course, the machinating Macaulay brazenly declared that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India, and sought accordingly to create "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" by means of his education system - which the system did achieve.

An important example of what is being ignored by most Indian scholars is the current American Orientalism. They have failed to counter it on any significant scale.

It was Edward Said (1935-2003) an American professor at Columbia University who called the bluff of "the European interest in studying Eastern culture and civilization" (in his book *Orientalism* (1978)) by showing it to be an inherently political interest; he laid bare the subtile, hence virulent, Eurocentric prejudice aimed at twin ends – one, justifying the European colonial aspirations and two, insidiously endeavouring to distort and delude the intellectual objectivity of even those who could be deemed to be culturally considerate towards other civilisations. Much earlier, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947) had shown the resounding hollowness of the *leitmotif* of the "White Man's Burden."

But it was given to Rajiv Malhotra, a leading public intellectual in America, to expose the Western conspiracy on an unprecedented scale, unearthing the *modus operandi* behind the unrelenting and unhindered program for nearly two centuries now of the sabotage of our ancient civilisation yet with hardly any note of compunction. One has only to look into Malhotra's seminal writings - *Breaking India* (2011), *Being Different* (2011), *Indra's Net* (2014), *The Battle for Sanskrit* (2016), and *The Academic Hinduphobia* (2016) - for fuller details.

This pentad - preceded by *Invading the Sacred* (2007) behind which, too, he was the main driving force - goes to show the intellectual penetration of the West, into even the remotest corners (spatial/temporal/thematic) of our hoary heritage. There is a mixed motive in the latest Occidental enterprise, ostensibly being carried out with "pure academic concerns". For the American Orientalist doing his "South Asian Studies" (his new term for "Indology Studies"), Sanskrit is inherently oppressive - especially of Dalits, Muslims and women. And as an "antidote", therefore, the goal of Sanskrit studies henceforth should be, according to him, to "exhume and exorcise the barbarism" of social hierarchies and oppression of women happening ever since the inception of Sanskrit - which language itself came, rather, from outside India. Another important agenda is to infuse/intensify animosities between/among votaries of Sanskrit and votaries of vernacular languages in india. A significant instrument towards this end is to influence mainstream media so that the populace is constantly fed ideas inimical to the Hindu heritage. The tools being deployed for this are the trained army of "intellectuals" - of leftist leanings and "secular" credentials.

Infinity Foundation (IF), the brainchild of Rajiv Malhotra, started 25 years ago in the US, spearheaded the movement of unmasking the "catholicity" (- and what a euphemistic word it is!) of Western academia. The profound insights provided by the ideas of "Digestion" and the "U-Turn Theory" propounded by him remain unparalleled.

It goes without saying that it is *ultimately the Hindus in India who ought to be the real caretakers of their own heritage*; and with this end in view, **Infinity Foundation India (IFI)** was started in India in 2016. IFI has been holding a series of Swadeshi Indology Conferences.

Held twice a year on an average, these conferences focus on select themes and even select Indologists of the West (sometimes of even the East), and seek to offer refutations of mischievous and misleading misreportages/misinterpretations bounteously brought out by these

Indologists - by way of either raising red flags at, or giving intellectual responses to, malfeasances inspired in fine by them. To employ Sanskrit terminology, the typical secessionist misrepresentations presented by the West are treated here as *pūrva-pakṣa*, and our own responses/rebuttals/rectifications as *uttara-pakṣa* or *siddhānta.*

The first two conferences focussed on the writings of Prof. Sheldon Pollock, the outstanding American Orientalist (also of Columbia University, ironically) and considered the most formidable and influential scholar of today. There can always be deeper/stronger responses than the ones that have been presented in these two conferences, or more insightful perspectives; future conferences, therefore, could also be open in general to papers on themes of prior conferences.

Vijayadaśamī
Hemalamba Saṃvatsara
Date 30-09-2017

Dr. K S Kannan
Academic Director
and
General Editor of the Series

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Volume Editorial

Infinity Foundation India conducted two conferences in the recent past (in July 2016 and February 2017) which examined the impact of some of the writings of Prof. Sheldon Pollock of Columbia University. While the first conference had four themes, the second had six more; and all these ten topics pertained to the interpretations proffered by Pollock.

While there is no intention of, or point in, targeting particular individuals, the focus on Pollock was due to the fact that he is the most formidable of the American Orientalists today, and his views and interpretations appear to Hindus to be most pernicious, nevertheless most pervasive in influence: a good many contemporary scholars, especially in the West build on his pet ideas.

Pollock is obsessed with the notions of power and politics. As Malhotra points out, the word "power" occurs 600 times in his 2006 book *The Language of Gods...*; and the words "political" and "politics" occur 900 times! There is no event or utterance, be it the most innocuous, where he cannot see some vicious play of power. Pollock cannot be too proud of this idiosyncrasy, for he has lucid company in Prof. O'Flaherty for whom the most innocent of moves can reek of sexual ramifications. (We promise our readers to reserve a couple of volumes for her too). Eight volumes are being presented now for dealing with the ideas of Pollock: six volumes of around 250 or more pages each and two monographs authored by two young Sanskrit scholars. Of these eight, Volume 1 is being presented now.

A conspectus of the various papers in this volume is quite in order here. This volume presents eight papers in two parts – three on what is perceived by the ilks of Pollock as the diabolical influence that Sanskrit and the *Śāstra*-s have had, directly or indirectly, on Nazism; and five on the vile theme of the putative death of Sanskrit.

Part 1 of the book is devoted to the treatment of the supposed Sanskrit springs of the Nazi holocaust: the weird and convoluted links Pollock belabours to manufacture between the two stand exposed here.

The first paper authored by K Gopinath (**Ch. 1**) exposes the propagandist designs evidenced in Pollock's 1993 paper "Deep Orientalism: Notes on Sanskrit and Power beyond the Raj". Gopinath's paper shows how Pollock subtly brings in extraneous elements, invokes *selective* evidence that can suggest his own *prefixed* conclusions, and employs other devices – all typical protocols of propagandism. Pollock supposes a trans-mogrification of German Indologists into supporters of Nazism, blatantly ignoring all the same, how, for example, famed German physicists and philosophers too vouched for their Nazi sympathies. Gopinath musters evidence from writers such as Grunendahl to show how Pollock is a past master in the suppression of inconvenient facts, and thus proves himself a prevaricator *par excellence*.

The second paper by Ashay Naik (**Ch. 2**) makes a *pūrva-pakṣa* of Pollock's 2001 paper "Deep Orientalism?". Pollock endeavours to establish therein a link between German Indology and the notorious Nazi ideology. The Nazis indulged in the worst of horrors, and linking Sanskrit with the Nazis can easily make Sanskrit culpable: is not an abettor a partaker of crime, after all? Naik organises his paper under the four labels of Orientalism viz. the British, the German, the Sanskrit, and the American. Pollock has sought to implicate Sanskrit knowledge as a factor in the development of Nazi ideology. Equipped with pertinent facts and cogent logic, Ashay shows how Pollock's comparative morphology of domination, for all its polemic, remains untenable.

The third paper by Koenraad Elst (**Ch. 3**) closely considers the claims of Pollock only to find them "surprisingly weak or simply wrong"; Pollock is not, of course, the first person to exploit the links between racism, Nazism, and the study of Indo-European culture on the one hand, and Sanskrit on the other. The counterpoint viz. Adolf Hitler's contempt for Hinduism, though well known, is cautiously concealed by Pollock, and blatant lies are made use of so as to subserve his own polemical writings. While there is, of course, a general animus against Hinduism in American academe, Pollock's deliberate and concocted links between Hinduism and National Socialism suggest "a rare animosity against Hinduism". Again, Western Indologists spare no efforts to depict the Indian caste-system as slavery and racism, for which they invoke the discredited yet handy AIT (Aryan Invasion Theory), and fantasize a Nazi parallel, notwithstanding the fact that nowhere in the long history of India do we find even a faint hint of genocide in connection with the *varṇa* system. He who makes public allegations, and cannot prove them, is guilty of slander, which Pollock patently is. The author of the paper asks the rhetorical question, finally, as to whether Pollock is at all fit to be trusted to preside over the publication of Indian classics.

Part 2 of the book is devoted to the projection of the "death" of Sanskrit. The discovery *non pareil* of Pollock is that Sanskrit has died multiple times, even though it was still-born (his own naive fancy, again!) Fallacies galore of Pollockian polemics are well laid bare here.

The first paper in this part by Naresh Cuntoor (**Ch. 4**) prepares for us a decoction of Pollock's concoctions. To sample but three: Sanskrit had a symbiotic relationship with royal power; Sanskrit grammar and *śleṣa (paranomasia)* enhanced the political status of kings; royal patronage favoured Sanskrit over vernacular language. Extraordinary is Pollock's sacrifice of empirical data at the altar of his own brand of narrative building. What comes handy as a powerful tool for butchery of facts is the complicated style of writing Pollock meticulously deploys. Unfortunately for Pollock, opacity of diction cannot always shield the deviousness of his designs. Pollock freely posits theories that never once make even a pretense of being at first a hypothesis that may naturally need to be justified. All the accoutrements of posturing are well in place: like a conscientious author, Pollock starts with meticulous and detailed enumeration of various caveats; one however has only to wait to get to the section of his conclusions to realise that all those caveats are thrown into winds unceremoniously. Pollock draws, again, analogies of Sanskrit with the truly dead languages, but only fallaciously.

The second paper is by Satyanarayana Das (**Ch. 5**). Simply entitled "Sanskrit is not Dead" this paper puts Pollock in the dock by presenting a case study - of the Vraja literature of the 16th-17th centuries - that betrayed, against the wishful thinking of Pollock, the remarkable historical continuity and vitality of Sanskrit. The author shows how Pollock does not provide either statistical evidence, or even proper references for his claims. The only point of note in Pollock's presentation of a "momentous rupture" (post the "vibrant period" 1550-1750), is that it is just sensational-in lieu of being really sensible. As against the whimsical claims of Pollock, the paper of Das makes its own argument sound, buttressed with apt statistical evidence.

The third paper by Jayaraman Mahadevan (**Ch. 6**) deals with the classic inane statement by Pollock viz. "Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language [Sanskrit] in a state of quasi-animation .... Sanskrit is dead". The paper sets forth pertinent information in abundance from one of the most important documents of the Government of India (which Pollock knows cannot claim ignorance of) viz. the *Report of the First Sanskrit Commission* constituted by the Government of India in 1956 with Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji as its Chairman; Chatterji, by the way, was by no means known for his sympathies with any "Hindutva" philosophy that Pollock is so fidgety about. This was in fact at a time when no "Hindutva force" worth the name was even heard of, much less had been shaping things, and, to speak the truth, it was during the very reign of the government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, "secularism" incarnate, euphemism for allergy to Hinduism, which called all the shots.

The *Report* was prepared covering a cross-section of India - (the then) 14 states of India, at 56 centres, and interviewing over 1100 persons – thus representing various shades of opinion. A perusal of the *Report* shows that the Britishers paid Sanskrit teachers *half the salary* they paid others, and worse, the hypocritical Nehru Government unabashedly perpetuated it! It was the response from the public – from Maharajas to the ordinary folk including non-Brahmins - that sustained Sanskrit in these adverse times. The paper has ably bleached the p(f)igments of Pollock's political imagination.

The fourth paper by Kannan and Meera (**Ch. 7**) scrutinises Pollock's paper of 2001 on the "Death of Sanskrit". The paper draws attention to the methodological idiosyncrasies of Pollock that can do no credit to a conscionable author: there is nothing for Pollock, for example, that cannot have a bearing on power. Pollock is aghast that Hindutva propagandists have sought to show – what is an elementary fact, after all – that Sanskrit is indigenous to India. Revival of Sanskrit is to him a mere "exercise in nostalgia". From the vast canvas of several millennia of the history of Sanskrit, Pollock picks (*read* cherry-picks) just four tricky points of time - to delineate the degeneration/disappearance of Sanskrit. Pollock indeed "sees things" that few others can: viz. that it is the benign Muslim kings that tried to patronize and protect Sanskrit (and not jettison and jeopardize Sanskrit), while Hindu kings were apathetic towards it! Pollock does not even attempt to camouflage his intense Islamophilia (matched only by his high Hinduphobia) when he makes light of the atrocious burning of libraries in Kashmir as but "fire accidents" – in lieu of speaking of the wanton destruction by the Muslim marauders, which no chronicler has ever made any secret of. Pollock can have few sympathisers even among American Orientalists except, of course, his own intellectual offsprings like Audrey Trushke. The other typical techniques of "List and Dismiss", "Perhaps...Probably...And therefore", "*divida et impera*", "Selective playing up and playing down", and the anachronistic and unprincipled superimposition of the frameworks of modern psychology and social science on Indian traditional lore of antiquity, to mention but a few – all illustrative of the contumely of an unchallenged maverick – are tellingly set forth in this paper.

The fifth (and the last) paper by Manogna Sastry (**Ch. 8**) also deals with Pollock's "Death of Sanskrit" paper of 2001. Starting with Sri Aurobindo's note on India's distinctness from the Occident, Ms. Sastry notes how there is a vast continuum of Western critics – from Sister Nivedita and Romain Rolland, sympathetic and understanding towards the Indian heritage at one end of the spectrum, and, at the other, the pompous and belligerent critics exemplified by Doniger and Pollock. American Orientalism has only spawned a plethora of scholars of the latter type. The facile and puerile assertion of Pollock that Sanskrit is championed just by promoters of Hindutva, is easily repudiated by her by way of citing the numerous independent attempts in support of Sanskrit, of several individuals and organizations that are totally independent of or utterly unaware of the Hindutva movement. And to no small effect has been related by her the research of Hanneder, to show how Pollock is eminently capable of interpreting all evidence to fit just his own pet theses, and by whatever means. Summoning "anecdotal factoids" to suppress key facts staring in the face, or again, reinforcing devious attempts so as to drive a wedge between Sanskrit and vernaculars (which many European Indologists have carefully and consistently cultivated for long) - are all no small feats of Pollock. Very telling are her words towards the conclusion of the paper that the opus of Pollock is not all in vain in that it has actually provided the clarion call to Indians – to resume the stewardship of the creation and organization of their own cultural instruments.

It goes without saying that the opinions expressed in the papers presented here are those of the respective authors. The authors hold themselves responsible for the veracity of their statements.

***

A survey of all the papers above may be said to reveal one important trait of Pollock. While not one paper here doubts or questions the profusion of Pollock's scholarship, every one without exception has expressed apprehensions about the integrity of Pollock reminding us thus of the *subhāṣita* – "*vyartham pāṇḍityam guṇa-varjitam*" ("What avails scholarship, after all, *sans* integrity?")!

Vijayadaśamī
Hemalamba Saṃvatsara
Date 30-09-2017

Dr. K S Kannan
Academic Director
and
General Editor of the Series

Part I

"Link" between Sanskrit and Nazism

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Chapter 1

German Indology, Sanskrit and Nazi ideology

– K. Gopinath

Abstract

We first discuss Pollock's work on the question of "German Indology, Sanskrit and Nazi ideology" in his paper "Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj" (1993). We critically examine his thesis on complicity of Sanskrit, through German Indology, for the Nazi genocide; other claims in the paper (such as German Indologists attributing degeneracy to India) are not addressed here, or briefly touched upon if at all. Using the propaganda model of the US media proposed by Herman and Chomsky (1988), we examine whether Pollock's writings on this subject can best be explained from a propaganda model. We end the paper with a brief discussion to examine if and how traditional knowledge systems or Indic systems could have the protection that artistic works in principle enjoy - such as "moral rights", a form of IPR. This has implications for Indic systems as many of them are in the informal domain and hence are subject to capture, disinformation or "digestion".

Introduction

Sheldon Pollock's work on the question of "German Indology, Sanskrit and Nazi ideology" is instructive in how certain questions are posed, extraneous elements subtly brought in, and selected evidence then marshalled to deduce or suggest certain desired conclusions. This is in essence how propaganda systems work and in this paper we attempt to show that it is indeed the case with Pollock's selective use of historical materials. I base my analysis on his 1993[1] paper "Deep Orientalism? Notes on Sanskrit and Power Beyond the Raj", starting first by summarising Pollock's main argument (in parts labelled **A to E** below).

A. At the outset, Pollock expands the scope of the word "orientalism" very broadly and makes it equivalent to any system of domination or oppression: to wit,

> "...orientalism is disclosed as a species of a larger discourse of power that divides the world into 'betters and lessers' and thus facilitates the domination (or 'orientalization' or 'colonization') of any group". (Pollock 1993:77)

B. But then, a good part of the last 5 centuries were mostly ones of European/American domination or oppression of the rest of the world. Cleverly, Pollock takes examples of inequality in Indian society in the past and now makes it also some type of (expanded notion of) "orientalism" because of the inequality that he perceives:

> "indigenous discourses of power - the various systematized and totalized constructions of inequality in traditional India - might be viewed as a preform of orientalism". (Pollock 1993:77).

Hence, there is now continuity between Indian "internal orientalism" and other types of later orientalisms. Furthermore, for Pollock, "Sanskrit knowledge presents itself to us as a major vehicle of the ideological form of social power in traditional India", with "restriction of access to Sanskrit 'literacy' as a principal mode of domination". Also, "Sanskrit studies, as an indigenous form of knowledge production [is] equally saturated with domination", opines Pollock. Hence both Sanskrit knowledge as well as Sanskrit studies are implicated as major factors in oppression, which now is recast as internal "orientalism".

C. He then argues that German Indology has been the most productive "orientalism" in the past and documents that it transmogrified into an area of study that had many Nazi sympathizers. Unscientifically, Pollock does not consider other disciplines and check whether practitioners in those fields had any such sympathy for Nazis. For example, Martin Heidegger (a celebrated philosopher) and Werner Heisenberg (a celebrated physicist), to quote just 2 names, have also been suspected to have Nazi sympathies. Indeed, from the 1920's, there was a "Deutsch Physik" movement led by two Nobel laureates (Philippe Lenard and Johannes Stark) that rejected the (Jewish) physics of Einstein (relativity theory, the inadmissibility of ether, etc). During WWII many famous German scientists participated in the German atomic bomb project (e.g., Hans Geiger, Walter Gerlach, Otto Hahn, Werner Heisenberg, Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker). Another example is the discipline of anatomy; Sabine Hildebrandt (2016) discusses (in the "front matter" of the book) the

> "anatomists' involvement in racial hygiene as the leading science of NS ideology" and that their "complicity with the Nazi state went beyond the merely ideological. They progressed through gradual stages of ethical transgression, turning increasingly to victims of the regime for body procurement, as the traditional model of working with bodies of the deceased gave way, in some cases, to a new paradigm of experimentation with the 'future dead.' "

(The involvement of anatomists will be discussed further in connection with the genocide in Namibia and later during WWII.) In disciplines such as anthropology and genetics, racial theories were *de rigueur* not just in Germany but widespread in Europe and America till the end of WWII.

Furthermore, disputing the centrality or the 'materiality' of Indology studies in the German academia, using yearbooks of the latter used by Pollock himself, Grünendahl (2012:192) reports that he

> "discovered that within this period [1933-38] two Indological chairs fell vacant, while the overall position of Indology remained as peripheral as it always had been in German academia, contrary to what Pollock would have us believe."

Without comparative data of Nazi sympathies in other disciplines, Pollock's thesis on the role of German Indology in the holocaust is a house of cards; so too, his preposterous claim of Sanskrit 's culpability.

D. The next step for Pollock is to conflate the native meritocratic system (Aryan vs non-Aŕyan) with racism though the word *ārya* was never used in the racial sense in India. It is surprising that even after notions of "Aryan race" have been debunked repeatedly, Pollock resuscitates it; note his almost casual way of posing it below without any supporting evidence with respect to "race": native forms of oppression were

> "creating the idea of race and concurrently legislating racial exclusivity, asserting linguistic hierarchy and claiming superiority for the language of the masters, and securing an order of domination by monopolizing 'life chances' such as forms of literacy".
> (Pollock 1993:78)

If race is really involved, how does Pollock explain the phenomenon of a *saṁnyāsin's* "non-caste"hood as they can be initially from any *varṇa* (see, for example, how Buddha phrases this in *Aggañña Sutta*); no racial system in the world, that I am aware of, would allow such a change. Similarly, Dharampal (1971:preface) reports, while travelling in the late 50's, that "there was no *jati* on a yatra" (ie. during long pilgrimages, many normative practices do not obtain). The Indic tradition also has many examples of *kṣatriya-s* (such as Viśvāmitra) becoming *brāhmaṇa-s;* the Peshwa Baji Rao I could be considered as a recent example in the opposite direction. There was upward mobility too; example can be given of Shivaji who categorised himself as a Kṣatriya using the flexibility in the system itself. Many *jāti-s* have created genealogies or declared themselves as *sūrya-vaṁśī* ("belonging to the Solar Genealogy") or *candra-vaṁśī* ("belonging to the Lunar Genealogy") based on the social reality obtaining. There is enough evidence to argue that the *jāti-varṇa* system is closer to a somewhat fluid sociological system of differentiation/inequality (that is not too different from other systems elsewhere in premodern times) and not based on biological race.

Interestingly, the native *varṇa-jāti* system was misconstrued into an inflexible "caste" system by the British/Europeans based on their own social regimentation prevailing in Europe/Americas since at least the 15th century with, for example, castas, mestizos, and mulattos in the Americas. Furthermore, the "one-drop" rule in US statutes and elsewhere all the way into the beginning of the 20th century made even a "drop" of black or Native American blood made them the inferior race; even Thomas Jefferson's children through his mixed race concubine were born into slavery, with some of them having to "escape" to become free! There is still an ongoing project in many parts of the West where the *varṇa-jāti* system is to be declared as equivalent to racism with attendant stringent penalties (eg. attempted discussion/legislation in UK/EU parliaments or UN, or in the academia where Dalits are equated with blacks through the Afro-Dalit project).

With the racism angle thus brought in without any justification whatsoever, now one could argue that Nazis were only continuing the race discrimination that Indians were doing all along!

In the quote cited above, Pollock also mentions linguistic hierarchy. This is surprising to me at least as many regional languages were in a 'give and take' relationship with Sanskrit; for example, almost all the well known poets of Telugu between 10th century and 16th century were also Sanskrit pandits. While prejudiced opinions are to be expected in any subjective enterprise (such as affinity for a language), to elevate them to notions of domination or superiority seem inappropriate. In the last 2 centuries, given the official neglect of Sanskrit and motivated writings of European or American Oriental scholars, such harmful ideas have gained prominence, especially in Tamil Nadu (for example, Dravidian linguistic "separatism"). One can also use Pollock's own argument against his own writing - that his use of "high" and convoluted English language in his articles is a source of oppression and domination over others.

E. Next, because of the resilience of the Sanskrit knowledge systems for more than 2 millennia, there must be, according to Pollock, something in Sanskrit ("deep structure" of order, domination and oppression?) that makes internal orientalism (see Pollock 2006) where he argues that Sanskrit cosmopolis is oppressive) and the German (Nazi) Indology orientalism variety possible. The Germans studied Sanskrit knowledge systems intensely and hence "infected" themselves with that virus of deep structure, and hence order, domination and oppression were the hallmark of Nazis. In a sense, Sanskrit or its knowledge systems molded the Nazis into murderous machines.

Going through these steps **A to E**, it is obvious that there are too many leaps of logic, convenient conflating of categories and too many rhetorical devices (*jalpa/vitaṇḍā*) used to, so to say, "pre-form" a conclusion. For example, in the section "For a Critical Indology" in this paper where there is a serious effort to prove some causal connection with Sanskrit and the Nazi holocaust, he writes

> 1: "Reviewing Indology in the way we have just done, we encounter a field of knowledge whose history and object both have been permeated with power." (Pollock 1993:111)

Yes, in the way it has been presented by Pollock (ie. in isolation with respect to developments elsewhere), the field and the object matter does seem to revel in themes of domination and oppression. But does Pollock also weigh in other fields of knowledge, their histories and their objects? For a start, religious thought that permitted slaving societies in Arabia or of Spain/Portugal/England/US, or the Christian models of understanding that resulted in burning down Alexandria and its libraries, or the Islamic ones that caused Nalanda's libraries to be burnt or Bamiyan to be destroyed recently, or the European/Machiavellian and racial systems of thinking in the 19th century that finally resulted in the British and other European powers to burn down the summer palace in Beijing along with its valuable artefacts in the late 19th century? Their role in creating the ground for later holocausts is not even hinted at. We may well heed the following "gentle" observation, even if not exactly apposite given Pollock's obvious wide erudition:

> *ekaṁ śāstram adhīyāno na gacchecchāśtra-nirṇayam*

If you know/study only one subject, you cannot go around saying anything authoritatively even in that subject!

Furthermore, continuing to quote from the same paper,

> 2: "From its colonial origins in Justice Sir William to its consummation in SS Obersturmführer Wüst ["Nazi" Indologist], Sanskrit

> and Indian studies have contributed directly to consolidating and sustaining programs of domination." (Pollock 1993:111)

Why are the studies consummated with Wüst, hardly known to most? Why not Ingalls or others? Bringing in Wüst is underhanded; it emphasizes the Nazi connection for no reason. The mention of William Jones makes it clear that German Indology is not entirely the subject of discussion here.

It is also not clear why these studies have contributed to domination; I believe Pollock has vastly overstated this aspect and will be discussed further down.

Also,

> 3: "In this (noteworthy orthogenesis) these studies have recapitulated the character of their subject, that indigenous discourse of power for which Sanskrit has been one major vehicle and which has shown a notable longevity and resilience." (Pollock 1993:111)

This quote may not be all that clear but what the sentence is likely to be saying, paraphrased, is that the subject of study (Sanskrit or Indology broadly) made its students (German Indologists) into supporters also of oppression/domination (effectively, Nazis or provide legitimacy for Nazis). The latter property is almost axiomatic of Sanskrit given the internal structure of Sanskrit itself (due to "orthogenesis", the property of an inflexible internal structure that manifests itself in any environment). It is not clear why Sanskrit alone of the classical languages is a major vehicle of discourse of power. One could argue that Latin, still used in Vatican liturgy, could fit the bill. The Roman empire after all was a large empire for 6 to 7 centuries with a large war machine; it would not give any quarter to an enemy that would not fall in, a good example being how Carthage was annihilated to the last "man". Given that Vatican is widely believed to have cooperated (see below) with Fascism and Nazism, Latin is a far stronger contender, using a similar logic of argumentation, for inducing genocidal tendencies in Nazis.

Next:

> 4: "From such factors as the semantic realm of the distinction arya/anarya and the biogenetic map of inequality (along with less theorized material, from Vedic and epic literature, for instance),

> it may seem warranted to speak about a "pre-form of racism" in early India (Geissen 1988: 48ff.), especially in a discussion of indigenous "orientalism," since in both its classic colonial and its National Socialist ["Nazi"] form orientalism is inseparable from racism." (Pollock 1993:107)

Pollock cleverly introduces "racism" (biogenetic map of inequality?) here to set the stage for further mental manipulations by equating indigenous "orientalism" with racism; now one can talk about internal orientalism as racism. He then tars most of the early literature (Vedic and epic) as racist without having to give any proof (because "less theorized"). The most obvious racism that has been practised is that between black/white, European/ Native American, Arab/Nubian, European/Asian, European/ Yellow/Chinese/Japanese, etc. But the concept of race is at best extraneous in the larger Indian context as discussed before; what obtained here as many have argued is that of a reasonably fluid *varṇa-jāti* continuum (Dirks 2001). Note that biogenesis as understood conventionally is that life forms are produced by life forms (contrast with abiogenesis); it is not clear what Pollock exactly has in mind here; I am assuming this is Pollock's convoluted way of talking about racism, just as with many other examples of such ambiguous uses in the paper.

Note that Pollock also weakens his own case:

> 5: "From among the complexities of NS analysis of the *Urheimat* question it is worth calling attention to the way the nineteenth-century view expressed by Schlegel was reversed: the original Indo-Europeans were now variously relocated in regions of the Greater German Reich; German thereby became the language of the core (Binnensprache), whereas Sanskrit was transformed into one of its peripheral, "colonial" forms." (Pollock 1993:92)

If German Indology makes Sanskrit into a peripheral form in the question of *Urheimat* (the original home of the Aryans), an issue that "had always been a scholarly question prompted and driven by the ideological demands of the European polities in which this discourse originated" (1993:92), then it is strange that a peripheral form of "domination and oppression" (the Aryan/Sanskrit combine) would now be so central when it comes to holocaust as Pollock has implied. In this connection, it is not clear why Sanskrit should be discussed at such lengths as Pollock has attempted.

What is striking is the almost complete erasure of the "elephant" in the room: British and US role in not seriously attempting to stop the Nazis till 1939 (e.g., Chamberlain's Munich treaty in 1938; this is also a credible allegation by the Communists of that era) and active collaboration by Vatican with Italian and German fascism. Instead, he spends tens of pages looking at obscure sources from German Indologists who are hoping to use Indian (Sanskrit) materials to show "Indo-Germanic" superiority over other Europeans or provide some cover for Nazism. Or, find one Indian author with certain views (e.g., Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara) out of the many and make him the spokesperson for all Indians and even then probably not fairly. For example: "It is in this context that Lakṣmīdhara adduces a foundational principle of the traditional Indian discourse of power: 'Whatever act the *arya-s* who know the Vedas claim to be *dharma*, is *dharma*; whatever they reject is said to be *adharma*.'" (Pollock 1993: 107). First, if Arya is taken to be the traditional meaning of "a noble person" instead of a member of a race that Europeans/Americans made it out to be, it is not clear what the difficulty is. Note also that the plural of Arya is used; hence it could be a "committee" of noble persons (a collegium of eminent judges?) and thus quite reasonable (just as law even now is what judges interpret it to be). Additionally, other formulations of *dharma* are widely available and more accessible; e.g., *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (Śikṣā Valli, Anuvāka 11) instructs *snātaka-s* ("graduates") as follows:

> *yāny anavadyāni karmāṇi | tāni sevitavyāni | no itarāṇi |*
> "Those actions that are blameless, follow only those, not any other".

Compare with the Popperian conception of Science: "*Consider hypotheses as provisionally true that cannot be refuted or falsified*"

> *yāny asmākaṁ sucaritāni tāni tvayopāsyāni | no itarāṇi |*
> "What acts of ours are good, follow those, not any other".
> *ye ke cāsmacchreyāṁso brāhmaṇāḥ | teṣāṁ tvayā"sanena praśvasitavyam |*

> "Whosoever *brāhmaṇa*-s are better than ourselves, comfort them by offering a seat 'don't so much as breathe aloud"!

Note here the open-ended perspective (for example, the inviting of 'better' teachers) rather than the closed perspective (or authoritarian model) that Pollock wants to imply.

Critical Study of the Genesis of Nazi Genocide

If a serious academic were to critically understand the ghastly Nazi phenomenon, many alternative and pertinent explanations would suggest themselves and other than what Pollock wants to suggest such as casually implicating Sanskrit's "deep structure" for a role in genocide. Two major alternative explanations are as follows:

1. Church and persecution of Jews

First, consider Raul Hilberg's *magnum opus* (Hilberg 1961) on the destruction of European Jews where he shows with great force that the many canonical laws of the church (he lists at least 22) and what the Nazis promulgated were same or very similar (see also Nicholls 1993:204-206). To list only three examples (out of 22), consider:

a: "Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together,"

Synod of Elvira, 306 CE

Cf. "Jews barred from dining cars," Transport Minister to Interior Minister,

Dec 30, 1939, *Document NG*-3995.

Or,

b: "Prohibition of intermarriage and of sexual intercourse between Christians and Jews," Synod of Elvira, 306 CE

Cf. "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor,"

Sep 15, 1935 (RGB1 I, 1146).

Or,

c: "Jews not permitted to show themselves in the streets during Passion Week,"

3rd Synod of Orleans, 538 CE

Cf. "Decree authorizing local authorities to bar Jews from the streets on certain days

(i.e., Nazi holidays)"

Dec 3, 1933 (RGB1 I, 1676).

Given the extensive and detailed prohibitions on the Jews by the Church, one can easily surmise that deep-seated prejudices became established in the Church as well as internalized by the church-goers during the approximately two millennia, as admitted by no less than a recent Pope (Pope Benedict XVI, once a "Hitler Youth" himself[2]) "... it cannot be denied that a certain insufficient resistance to this atrocity on the part of Christians can be explained by an inherited anti-Judaism present in the hearts of not a few Christians."[3] For example, Matthew 23:31-33, says of Pharisees ("lower class" Jews), "... You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell?"

However, for Pollock,

> "The myth of Aryan burst from the world of dream into that of reality when the process of what I suggest we think of as an internal colonization of Europe began to be, so to speak, shastrically codified, within two months of the National Socialists' capturing power (April 1933)". (Pollock 1993: 86)

Where did the "shastrically" notion come from? Why not say it comes from the Synods (ie. synodically) as shown by Hilberg which is more direct historically and attested and not just some casually and casuistically thrown word? The mischief can be understood if one is discussing untouchability with its restrictions on sharing food in India: suppose I use the word "synodically" in such discussions as Jews and Christians were also not to share food as per the Synod of Elvira CE 306? My submission is that Pollock's use of "shastrically" is in the same category.

Similarly,

> "The whole weight of these early laws rested on the concept "Aryan" (or rather, somehow significantly, at first on its negation)."
>
> (Pollock 1993: 87)

But, what about Hilberg's detailed analysis? Is not non-Aryan here just another name for Judaic only as it is not stressing any aspect of Aryan culture but talking about Jews in a coded way only.

There is extensive literature on the subject of Catholic (Vatican), Protestant and Lutheran complicity and a good summary can be found in an "occasional" paper by Ericksen[4]. To quote just one relevant, though longish, passage (2009:13–14):

> "Gerhard Kittel [a well known German Protestant theologian during the Nazi years] assessed Adolf Hitler quite accurately and liked what he saw. That would explain why Kittel's antisemitism grew more intemperate between 1933 and 1944 and why he never apologized after 1945, but energetically defended his own harsh attacks upon Jews. He claimed that his antisemitism had been entirely consistent with his Christian faith and no harsher than the antisemitism of Jesus or Paul[47]. His only concession was to acknowledge the obvious, that the death camps could not be defended. I think this understanding best explains Kittel but also helps us understand those many other church leaders, pastors, theologians, and lay people who applauded Hitler, who called 1933 a year of rebirth, and, in the words of Paul Althaus, considered Hitler "a gift and miracle from God"[48]. The problem was not that they misunderstood Hitler, but that they so readily reconciled their consciences and their Christian identities to the harshness of the Nazi state."
>
> "Why? I have not tried to address that question here, but the short answer is this: They were so hurt by World War I and the national humiliation of the Versailles Treaty, they were so opposed to the open society created by democracy and the Weimar Republic, they were so frightened by the economic crises of hyper inflation and then the Great Depression, and they were so threatened by the sociological changes of the modern world that someone as ideologically aggressive as Adolf Hitler seemed an answer to all their problems. He was the candidate of military strength and national pride; the candidate of family values, promising, among other things, to put women back in the home where they belonged; and the candidate whose antisemitism fit their own preconceptions and concern that Jews did not really belong in an ideal, unified Christian society [49]. Based upon their hopes and dreams, Christians and other Germans found it easier to march behind Adolf Hitler than we would like to think. An honest assessment of the historical record seems to make that clear. It cannot be the legitimate task of historians to bury, ignore, try to hide or try to ignore that complex reality."

Tragically, Pollock precisely does that (even worse, shifts the blame) and trivialises the difficult experience of the Germans just after WWI as a mindless adoption of (concocted) racial ideas from a far away land (India) and Indic thought system that had no almost relevance in their lives except in the rarefied and far removed academic world.

Another source of Nazi thinking was the worldview of "German Christians". Quoting from the same link for the Holocaust website (see United States Holocaust Memorial Museum), "Historically the German Evangelical Church (comprised of 28 regional churches or Landeskirchen that included the three major theological traditions that had emerged from the Reformation: Lutheran, Reformed, and United) viewed itself as one of the pillars of German culture and society, with a theologically grounded tradition of loyalty to the state. During the 1920s, a movement emerged within the German Evangelical Church called the Deutsche Christen, or "German Christians." The "German Christians" embraced many of the nationalistic and racial aspects of Nazi ideology. Once the Nazis came to power, this group sought the creation of a national "Reich Church" and supported a "nazified" version of Christianity." Martin Luther in the 16th century and other German historical figures were not free from anti-Jewish racism and it is not surprising that German Christians were, if not actively, at least passively involved in the pogroms in Germany.

Yet another source of Nazi thinking was the *völkisch* movement in Germany that "essentially combined nationalism with a sentimental patriotic interest in German folklore and history" (Ross 2011:504). Unfortunately, this descended into anti-Jewish racism in many instances as Jews were seen as outsiders.

2. European Role in Genocides Just before WWI

Second, another likely explanation comes from the extensive experience of conducting regular genocides by Europeans on the hapless natives of many countries in the 18th to early 20th century itself. Benjamin Madley writes about how expertise in genocide travelled from German campaigns in South West Africa to Auschwitz and suggests how this experience incubated ideas and methods adopted and developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe (Madley 2005:429-464):

> "The German terms Lebensraum and Konzentrationslager, both widely known because of their use by the Nazis, were not coined by the Hitler regime. These terms were minted many years earlier in reference to German South West Africa, now Namibia, during the first decade of the twentieth century, when Germans colonized the land and committed genocide against the local Herero and Nama peoples. Later use of these borrowed words suggests an important question: did Wilhelmine [German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1888-1918] colonization and genocide in Namibia influence Nazi plans to conquer and settle Eastern Europe, enslave and murder millions of Slavs and exterminate Gypsies and Jews? This article argues that the German experience in Namibia was a crucial precursor to Nazi colonialism and genocide and that personal connections, literature, and public debates served as conduits for communicating colonialist and genocidal ideas and methods from the colony to Germany."

Note that the genocidal campaigns against the Jews were started barely 2 decades later. At this stage, it is interesting to briefly list some additional details that are relevant to understand how the German colonialism in Namibia directly influenced Nazi thinking (most of this information is summarized from the document collection in Bartrop and Jacobs (2015) vol2, p. 997-1110; we do not give detailed references here for brevity). In 1840's, the Rhenish Missionary Society was established in Namibia (the colonial German Southwest Africa). In 1884, Bismarck's Berlin conference allotted spheres of influence in Africa amongst the colonial powers; Germany now had the 3rd largest area after Britain/France. During 1885-1904, there was intense competition between Hereros, Namas in Namibia and German outsiders for land/cattle; there were minor battles with multiple realignments amongst the contenders. Just as in US with respect to Native Americans, Germans wilfully broke signed treaties, stole land, and abused natives economically, racially, sexually etc. During the early part of this phase (1885-90), Heinrich Goering (father of the Nazi leader) was the Imperial Commissioner of South W Africa. In 1904, there was a major Herero rebellion aided by Nama (the latter had realized by this time that Germans were a bigger danger). Gen van Trotha, the Commander in Chief of German colonial forces (who incidentally was earlier part of 8 nation alliance that suppressed the Boxer rebellion in China), instituted a systematic policy of extermination (murder, dehydration, poisoning wells); there were also medical experiments on the victims. The Germans also borrowed the concept of concentration camps from the British (from Lord Kitchener's camps for Boers and Africans).

The German colonization of Namibia had the unfortunate effect of making racism and eugenics fashionable at the academic, social and political levels in Germany; US was already advanced in this area given that they had to either dispossess the Native Americans, subjugate blacks or provide legitimation for such acts, with as many as 23 US states (such as Indiana, California, Washington) having the earliest compulsory sterilization programs in the world legally, inspired by the "scientific" discipline of "eugenics", from 1907 onwards (See Reilly 1987:153-170)[5]. The direct academic roots of Nazi racism can be said to be through the tutelage of the German professor of medicine, anthropology and eugenics Eugen Fischer who organized experiments on African victims of Heroro revolt (including on body parts, with organized export of skulls, etc). Due to the widespread sexual exploitation of the Namibians by the Germans, there was widespread alarm in Germany about mixed blood; his eugenics program therefore advocated "improvement of society by preventing birth of inferior races and encouraging birth of superior races". He authored a book on mixed children of European men and Hottentot (a derogatory term for Namibians) women in German southwest Africa. His recommendations that mixed descendants be not allowed to reproduce were followed and by 1912 interracial marriage was prohibited throughout the German colonies (note the later Nazi regulations on Jews). Note that California was already much ahead in "thinking" on eugenics by the turn of the 20th century; by 1933, California state had subjected more people to forceful sterilization than all other U.S. states combined (the latter number a total of 65,000) (Kevles 1994:18). The forced sterilization program later engineered by the Nazis was partly inspired by California's laws and initially had even support from Rockefeller Foundation!

Eugen Fischer also wrote an influential book on "principles of heredity" in 1921, the German title being closer to "Foundations of Human Hereditary Teaching and Racial Hygiene", along with two others (Baur and Lenz). Fischer's part in the book concentrated on the different racial groups on earth while Lenz's part on the topic of racial hygiene. The second edition of this book was read by Hitler when he was in prison (1923) and the ideas in this book seem to have formed the core of racial ideas in Mein Kampf (published Oct 1924); a search of this book shows complete absence of any Indic thinking other than the use of words Aryan or Swastika but with much discussion of racial theories common in Europe in connection with Jews, blacks and Hottentots (Namibians), including also the widely prevalent European notion that British rule is "beneficial" for India. In 1927, Fischer became the Director of Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology and in 1933 started teaching racial hygiene to SS doctors responsible to guard "purity of race", the same year Adolf Hitler appointed him rector of the Frederick William University of Berlin (now Humboldt University). In 1935, he conducted experiments on racially mixed children in Rhine (born of German women and Asian/African soldiers during the Rhineland occupation) and enforced their sterilization. In 1943, his protégé's student Mengele conducted infamous experiments on Jewish/Roma twins/dwarves. Surprisingly, in 1952, he was appointed Hon. President of Anthropology Society! (now "denazified").

In 1985, an UN report declared Herero genocide the first of the 20th century. With worldwide protests against apartheid regimes in South Africa and Namibia gathering steam from late 70's, Namibia became independent in 1990; sensitive scholars in US may have come to know by now what happened in Namibia as there were also US student protests in '80s including at Columbia University (where some buildings were blockaded by students in 1985). In 2004, Germany's ambassador to Namibia apologized for the gruesome genocide but rejected any possibility of reparations; some medical exhibits (skulls, etc) of the victims were returned though.

One can forcefully argue that a clear racist thought system that was responsible for genocide and enacted ruthlessly in Namibia a better candidate explanation for the later Nazi genocides of Jews, Gypsies and other "undesirables" than far-fetched ideas that Pollock advances, though it might have had a minor role in the ecosystem of racial ideas prevalent in Germany, Europe or US.

Note that genocides such as in Namibia were not rare either; Madley discusses 2 other not well known cases (Madley 2004:167-192) in a summary article. Genocidal campaigns were conducted in Canada, Australia resulting in the native populations totally wiped out (e.g., Tasmanians. See "Colonial Genocides") or reduced to very small populations that were forced out into inhospitable areas. Extremely brutal regimes were common with colonialists from Netherlands and Belgium.

One instructive case is that of the Native American extermination in US. In *American Holocaust*, David Stannard shows connection between American ("Columbus") holocaust, Nazi holocaust and also the Church, with the dead estimated in the 100s of millions (Stannard 1993). He writes that "wherever Europeans or white Americans went, the native people were caught between imported plagues and barbarous atrocities, typically resulting in the annihilation of 95 percent of their populations." What kind of people, Stannard asks, do such horrendous things to others? His highly "provocative" answer: Christians. "Digging deeply into ancient European and Christian attitudes toward sex, race, and war, the cultural ground was well prepared by the end of the Middle Ages for the centuries-long genocide campaign that Europeans and their descendants launched–and in places continue to wage–against the New World's original inhabitants" (of interest to us: also against Indic systems). Stannard contends that the perpetrators of the American Holocaust drew on the same ideological wellsprings as did the later architects of the Nazi Holocaust.

More recently, Madley (2016) in his book *An American Genocide* writes

> "Under US rule, California Indians died at an even more astonishing rate. Between 1846 and 1870, California's Native American population plunged from perhaps 150,000 to 30,000. By 1880, census takers recorded just 16,277 California Indians. Diseases, dislocation, and starvation were important causes of these many deaths. However, abduction, *de jure* and *de facto* unfree labor, mass death in forced confinement on reservations, homicides, battles, and massacres also took thousands of lives and hindered reproduction. ... The organized destruction of California's Indian peoples under US rule was not a closely guarded secret. Mid-nineteenth-century California newspapers frequently addressed, and often encouraged, what we would now call genocide, as did some state and federal employees. Historians began using these and other sources to address the topic as early as 1890. That year, historian Hubert Howe Bancroft summed up the California Indian catastrophe under US rule: "The savages were in the way; the miners and settlers were arrogant and impatient; there were no missionaries or others present with even the poor pretense of soul-saving or civilizing. It was one of the last humanhunts of civilization, and the basest and most brutal of them all." In 1935, US Indian Affairs commissioner John Collier added, "The

> world's annals contain few comparable instances of swift depopulation - practically, of racial massacre - at the hands of a conquering race." In 1940, historian John Walton Caughey titled a chapter of his California history "Liquidating the Indians: "Wars and Massacres." Three years later, Cook wrote the first major study on the topic. He quantified the violent killing of 4,556 California Indians between 1847 and 1865, concluding that, "since the quickest and easiest way to get rid of the Northern California Indian was to kill him off, this procedure was adopted as standard for some years.""

Surprisingly, no obvious entity was held responsible in standard accounts till about 4-5 decades back; least of all the Church or Western powers. Columbus was widely praised as discoverer of the Americas, with resistance to observing Columbus Day formally starting in US only in 1992 in Davis, CA. Also Rajiv Malhotra (2009) writes:

> "The greatest episodes of ethnic cleansing and genocide of Native Americans occurred in the period following independence that was dominated by Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson . . . Because of the popular demonology of Native Americans and pseudo-scientific research to show their innate inferiority, ironically enough, the only defenders remaining were missionaries claiming that although Native Americans were presently savages they could be rescued by converting them to Christianity. Further physical genocide could be prevented by completing the cultural genocide. Sadly, freedom loving Americans explained away their genocide of Native Americans as the natives' inability to adapt to civilization:
>
> "As American hopes of creating a policy based on Enlightenment ideas of human equality failed, and as it relentlessly drove the Indians from all areas desired by the whites, Americans transferred their own failure to the Indians and condemned the Indians racially" (Horsman 1981, p. 207)."
>
> (Malhotra 2009:184,195)

The role of the British in genocidal campaigns could be of considerable interest, given that as an "Eastern" speaker of the English language, the principal language of hegemony in India currently, we can be said to feel it acutely that we need to speak an oppressors's language for economic survival, in contrast to what Pollock says, "Perhaps the western Sanskritist feels this most acutely, given that Sanskrit was the principal discursive instrument of domination in premodern India, . . .". Note that this sentiment of Pollock seems insubstantial or frivolous as he never experienced any oppression as such and his study or interest in Sanskrit can only be said to be voluntary; this may not be true for many "Eastern" English speakers or their immediate ancestors given the very recent history as we briefly discuss below.

The British engineered famines systematically, by levying and mindlessly enforcing unsustainable rates of taxes on land or exporting foodstuffs out even when famines were raging, in India and Ireland (Davis 2001)[6], and fought (along with other European and American powers) with China no less than 3 "opium wars" to be able to drug the hapless Chinese. Mike Davis (2001) concludes that between 12 and 29 million Indians died in the 1876-78 famine alone and this happened when there was a surplus of grains in 1876; he holds British state policy responsible for the large scale murder. Lytton Strachey (the godfather of the eponymic Bloomsbury bohemian intellectual) was the viceroy of British India at that time and he was busy organizing, during this horrific famine, the most colossal and expensive meal in world history for 68,000 officials, satraps and maharajas to celebrate "Kaiser-i-Hind" Victoria (Davis (2001), chapter 1). Furthermore, in 1879, Viceroy Lytton "actually overruled his entire council to accommodate Lancashire's lobby (the Association) by removing all import duties on British-made cotton, despite India's desperate need for more revenue in a year of widespread famine and tragic loss of life throughout Maharashtra" (Wolpert, 1989:248)." Due to lack of space we cannot go into further details but we will summarize some of the other insights: China and India, previous to European penetration/colonization, had historically managed food shortages much better; for example, "there was no mass mortality from either starvation or disease from the 1743-44 climatic catastrophe" (— "the spring monsoon failed two years in a row, devastating winter wheat in Zhili (Hubei) and northern Shandong; scorching winds withered crops and farmers dropped dead in their fields from sunstroke"); relief was sufficiently well organized that many deaths were avoided (Davis 2001:280). Similarly, Bajaj and Srinivas (1996) document in their book *Annaṁ Bahukurvīta* how the dharmic ecosystem over the millennia functioned during emergencies for relief, valorising the act of giving food as a solemn vow (*tad vratam*) rather than expecting free market to work well during shortages. Shockingly, in contrast, Lytton's Anti-Charitable Contributions Act 1877 forbade, on pain of imprisonment, private relief donations that interfered with free market setting of prices during the famine. Furthermore,

> "in contrast to the rigidity and dogmatism of British land-and-revenue settlements, both the Mughals and Marathas flexibly tailored their rule to take account of the crucial ecological relationships and unpredictable climate fluctuations of the subcontinent's drought-prone regions. The Mughals had "laws of leather," wrote journalist Vaughan Nash during the famine of 1899, in contrast to the British "laws of iron" (Nash 1900:92). Although the British insisted that they had rescued India from "timeless hunger," more than one district official was jolted when Indian nationalists quoted from a 1878 study published in the prestigious Journal of the Statistical Society that contrasted 31 serious famines in 120 years of British rule against only 17 recorded famines in the entire previous two millennia (Walford, 1878: 434–42)." (*ibid*).

To effect "balance of payments" of European powers (esp. British due to their massive war machine: "military expenditures never comprised less than 25 percent (34 percent including police) of [British] India's annual budget"; compare with typical 3–5% defence budgets now), recourse was also taken to effect financial exchange rate manipulations that pauperized the Chinese and Indian people as China and India were on silver standard: the move to gold standard by major European powers (for eg, Germany in 1871), then by US, Japan caused silver to depreciate. It is said that "the gold standard stole one quarter of the purchasing power of India's silver ornaments (Nash 1900:88)" (ibid.) this especially calamitous during the 4 major famines between 1875-1900. Taking just the Berar region, "during the famine of 1899–1900, when 143,000 Beraris died directly from starvation, the province exported not only thousands of bales of cotton but an incredible 747,000 bushels of grain (Satya 1994:148, 281–2, 296). Despite heavy labor immigration into Berari in the 1890s, the population fell by five percent and "life expectation at birth" twice dipped into the 15-years range before finally falling to less than ten years during the "extremely bad year" of 1900 (Dyson 1989:181–82)." Across British India, "in the age of Kipling - that "glorious imperial half century" from 1872 to 1921 - the life expectancy of ordinary Indians fell by a staggering 20 percent, a deterioration in human biology probably without precedent in the subcontinent's long history (Davis 1951:8)."

More recent are the Bengal famine during WWII (see, e.g., Mukerjee (2011) that details the extraordinary racism of Winston Churchill that resulted in the death of as many as 3 million Bengalis during WWII; for example, official records show that Churchill ensured that surplus grain in New Zealand would not be diverted to Calcutta during the famine but sent to godowns in Canada in spite of pressing entreaties of officials) and the 1971 genocide by Pakistan Army (deaths estimated to be between 1.5 to 3 million, a substantial number being Indic persons) in the now Bangladesh abetted by US/UK (US and British navies made a threatening pincer against India in December 1971 with nuclear submarines) and some European powers as they were busy looking elsewhere. As Pollock and his followers casually implicate Sanskrit's deep structure and Mīmāṁsaka-s for genocide, it may be of interest to know that many in Germany looked up to the obvious and demonstrated skills, for at least 1 century, of the British on how to "pacify" native populations. For example, use of Maxim machine guns post 1880's turned British imperial conquest into a genocidal murder of a number of colonized groups of people in Africa. The German genocide in Namibia through mass starvation, dehydration and plain unconscionable murder during 1904-14 was an example of how well the "German student" had learnt the lessons from the "English teacher". No wonder the Nazi Germans did not need much research into how to conduct a holocaust barely two decades later.

The period just before the WWI can be said to be the period when Europeans and Americans had perfected the art of mass murder on native peoples worldwide in the name of convenient and unscrupulously applied "natural principles". No wonder that WWI saw mass barbarism on a scale not known before; it requires no stressing that the Europeans had by now learnt the art of indiscriminate warfare (including use of poison gas and dropping of bombs on civilians using the new warplanes) except that WWI finally pushed the mindless violence mostly into the European continent itself.

Pollock quotes a part of *Gītā* 2.63 at the beginning of his article:

> *(smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśaḥ)*
> "When memory is destroyed, intelligence is lost."

This is an apt quote: when memory of Namibia and other genocides (either by Europeans or by Americans) or that of the Christian anti-Jewish attitudes in history are erased, intelligent reasoning is a casualty.

Motives for Pollock's Thesis

Given the brief listing of the above genocides and the attendant discussion, it is clear that Pollock is wide off the mark. But the important question is why is Pollock raising such indefensible arguments?

First, it seems to require only a little thought to ascribe Indic influence on Nazism, namely use of swastika (used in Nazi circles post 1920 as its symbol and adopted from swastika's use in the German völkisch nationalist movements) or the use of "Aryan" racist paradigm but one can argue that this is a reflection of lazy thinking. Considering the swastika, it is useful to make a deeper analysis. While swastika is used in an Indic context in an auspicious sense almost exclusively (*svastikaḥ => svasti (śubhāya hitaṁ)+ka* that which is good for auspiciousness), the swastika was used in the Nazi circles to project power or only in a political sense. The sense of "sacred" is completely absent. Moreover Nazi ideologues such as Alfred Rosenberg came to Germany from Russia/Latvia/Estonia backgrounds where the swastika symbol was/is still a local cultural symbol; e.g., the Air Force Academy (Finnish Air Force) has a swastika in its emblem as of now while the Finnish Air force had it till 1944 (Tepora (2016:171)). Furthermore, the swastika has some resemblance to the Iron Cross, a military decoration in the Kingdom of Prussia, and later in the German Empire (1871–1918) except for an additional stroke at each end and the slant.

Similarly, the use of Arya in Indic context was always a term of respect, not power or race. Furthermore all the major Nazi ideologues such as Rosenberg, Himmler, or Chamberlain had access to Sanskrit through translations and very unlikely that the "deep structure" of Sanskrit or the Mīmāṁsā theories (as casually thrown in by Halbfass) was known to them. Furthermore, Elst (2004) writes that

> "... in spite of Himmler's openness to occult theories about the Aryan race, his plans to weed out the handicapped and to promote the procreation of superior Aryan types can very simply be derived from eugenicist ideas which were fairly widespread in the medical community of not just Germany but also of Scandinavia, the USA and other countries."

So if Pollock is at all right about the connections between Sanskrit "deep structure" and Nazi genocide, then it has to be due to a sort of "butterfly effect" in spite of the massive evidence against it (ie. a butterfly flapping its wings in, say, China causes a major hurricane in Midwest US as the weather system is a chaotic system and not amenable to easy mathematical analysis; a very small change in the initial conditions or state of a deterministic nonlinear system can result in large differences in a later state!). Or, is Pollock's explanation an ode to *kākatālīya-nyāya* (the maxim of the accidental falling of the palm fruit upon a crow flying as per its fancy)?

What is surprising is that Pollock does not use the Christian Church as the "deep structure" that could be a good explanation for the Holocaust: its anti-semitism can be said to be "in-born" in a deep way. The Church has survived for 2 millennia as a powerful force (fully 1/3 rd of the world's population now subscribes to this "axiomatic" belief system without any need for any substantiation); it is also likely to be the largest MNC worldwide as of now in terms of resources and people (e.g., bishops in India are appointed from Vatican), and its imprint is everywhere (in the Arctic too!). Its "deep structure" should be impregnable as it has incorporated or "digested" Judaism (e.g., Old Testament), paganism (Greek, Roman or other European varieties), many native cultures worldwide (Native American, Ethiopian, Indian, etc). One can also argue that the English language fits the requirement for "deep structure", if not at the grammatical level, at the economic, social and political level; it is the global hegemon with many credits for subjugating hapless people worldwide. Contrast this with Sanskrit, whose "deep structure" that is said to have aided in genocide, is on its last legs having been systematically driven close to extinction by the Islamic and Christian military structures and now by the "modern secular" government in India itself. Its "deep structure" alone unfortunately does not seem enough to keep it alive (argued by Pollock himself!) given the brutal environment it finds itself in.

What is also surprising is that Pollock and his later followers casually invert what really happened: Romas or Gypsies (of Indic extraction) were murdered in large numbers (half a million) in Europe by the Nazis. Instead of Indic world giving ideas for genocide to the Europeans, the inverse is true with the people of Indic extraction, the Gypsies as widely believed, getting genocided against! The victim is victimized in Pollock's analysis. Another example of this phenomenon is the following: Pollock writes

> "The fact that the production of *dharma-nibandha* discourse, as noted above, almost perfectly follows the path of advance of the Sultanate from the Doab to Devagiri to the Deccan (Lakṣmīdhara, Hemādri, Madhaya) suggests, on the one hand, that totalizing conceptualizations of society became possible only by juxtaposition with alternative lifeworlds, and

> on the other, that they became necessary only at the moment when the total form of the society was for the first time believed, by the privileged theorists of society, to be threatened." (Pollock 1993: 105)

Here Islamic military structures who have gave no choice to large populations (Egypt, Persia, ...) except to accept Islamic domination (generously phrased as "alternative lifeworlds"!) are viewed as doing a "positive" favour; to resist is to accept "totalizing conceptualizations of society" by "privileged theorists of society". ISIS may be happy to hear of such formulations. Interestingly, in spite of many examples of wanton destruction of life and property by the Islamic armies in India, there is hardly any credible example of the reverse historically.

So what is the explanation for Pollock's writings? The only explanation that I can advance is that many of us, not excluding Pollock, are consciously or unconsciously embedded in powerful propaganda systems, and Pollock's writings, I believe, can only be explained on such a model. Consider the following feature that I came across in *The "Hindu"* newspaper in 2012 (Basu 2012).

Here a very favourable report is given of a German woman, whose father was admittedly a Nazi soldier but she now is an Indian convener of the National Alliance of People's Movements, and working in Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Madurai (having first come to India with her husband on a two-year study programme at the Christian Institute for Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore). She researches Dalit atrocities, issues affecting farm workers, tobacco workers, fisherfolk and construction labourers, women activists, and "has put her stamp on every movement radiating an uncomplicated spirit of affability".

What is surprising is her locus of work. When a massive tremor (Nazism) has struck Germany and one's own immediate father is involved (but "we were not aware of what was happening"), the most convenient thing is to study someone else's misdeeds, even if they are not on the same scale (compare with 50-80 million deaths in WWII). It sure makes you feel better! Not just that; there is livelihood available through the same complicit (worldwide) organization! While one is not arguing that she cannot do research on any topic of her choice, what is interesting is the choice made: a "concerned" person who escapes from family's Nazi involvement and points fingers at others. It would have behooved her to do research and/or teach, say, on how Nazis came to power, or how the Vatican helped Hitler to assume dictatorial power etc (note that if the Catholic Centre party had voted no or even abstained on the Enabling ("dictatorship") Act, Hitler would have been defeated but their leader Ludwig Kaas, a close friend and advisor to Eugenio Pacelli, the future Pope Pius XII, endorsed the Enabling Act[7]) or even how Lutheran Church funds conversions, etc in India resulting in severe social stress in rural and semi-urban communities and how foreign money supports the powerful Church establishment in South India (Malhotra et al 2011), etc.

Pollock's discourse is unfortunately not any better. Pollock's clear worldview is that "Hindutva" is responsible for many ills that afflict India and, as a concerned person, it his duty to fight against such tendencies. But the Hindutva Movement has arisen precisely because the Indic people have been essentially without voice for the better part of seven decades after 1947 (tragically possibly due to Hindu Mahasabha's Nathuram Godse murdering Gandhi and the Congress Party/Nehru family exploiting it to marginalize any serious Indic thinking). Given such a worldview but one without any serious basis in reality, only a propagandistic model makes sense to understand an eminent academic like Pollock; a more detailed look is given below.

By ignoring or not acknowledging recent research (e.g., the Namibian genocide of the Germans as a likely blueprint for Jewish genocide of the Nazis) and proposing the deep structure of Sanskrit as a possible candidate, Pollock is precisely doing a needed exercise in a propaganda system. If an obvious truth has to be made to recede into the background, non-issues that cloud one's thinking has to be casually introduced, then carefully nurtured and repeated by others so that in a few decades non-issues can take centre stage. A good example can be seen in the demonization of Modi since 2002; even if careful research shows the hand of vested or complicit interests (Congress Party, for example), the manufactured "facts" take a life of their own. This is a specific instance of a more general anti-Indic (or anti-BJP) propaganda. Madhu Kishwar in her book *Modi, Muslims and Media* documents these carefully but the propagandistic system present in the country does not yet allow for a careful examination of the truth (Kishwar 2013). It is interesting to know that Modi's visit to US when he was the CM of Gujarat was thwarted by a collaboration between evangelical Christian Right in the US, the Indian (expat) Left and the Islamic interests even when not a single FIR was filed against him (and till today not filed) (Janmohamed 2013). Pollock was one of the signatories to this petition[8]; the surprise here is that, without evaluating the proper situation on the ground and going by prejudices, he seems to accept that a "genocide" has taken place in Gujarat, while at the same time deflecting attention from the complicity of major genocidal actors such as Europeans/Americans or the Church with respect to what happened in Americas, Europe or Australia by targeting Sanskrit as a contributing factor. Modi was then and now is possibly seen as a threat as he is a symbol of a self-respecting nation and has proved many detractors wrong by his measured moves and hard work. When Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati in Orissa was killed, it was again a surprising collaboration between Maoists and evangelical Christians. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (which is dominated by evangelical Christians) strangely concluded in 2009 that India and Afghanistan are in the same category ("watch list of countries of particular concern") when it comes to religious freedom (and that Pakistan is actually better).

Another good example is that of Mathias Tierce, a German author, editor and yoga enthusiast (Ghosh 2012). His books include *Yoga in the Third Reich: Concepts, Contrasts, Consequences*. Probably influenced by Pollock-type writings, this yoga enthusiast here repeats unsubstantiated charges or unbalanced critiques; Himmler carrying the *Gītā* with him everywhere, or misusing or misunderstanding its complex contextual reasoning is used to taint *Gītā* with Nazism. *Gītā's* and Upaniṣadic messages are for a person who has already reached a high level of ethical conduct (as they equate the human self with the cosmic Self, a dangerous doctrine in the hands of immature persons) and not for someone who needs justifications for murderous deeds. *Gītā's* message is closer to "do your right or just duty without worrying about the rewards", but not to "do unjust (or murderous) acts with detachment (!) and expect to be free from that karma". However, this yoga enthusiast/author paraphrases supposedly one of Himmler's favourite *śloka-s as* "even if they commit evil acts, they can still remain untainted and unaffected by ones' own actions" which seems a clear fabrication. He uses this as an example of the amoral world of *Gītā* and Himmler. Probably, he is referring to *Gītā* 4.36 where it is said that even the worst sinner can cross over all the wickedness with the raft of knowledge. Or, mixing *Gītā* 4.36 with 4.14 where Kṛṣṇa says that "actions do not taint Me as I have no hankering after the results of actions"! Or, wilfully misconstruing *Gītā* 5.7 where a *karmayogin* is said to be untainted even though performing action by not also quoting that he has to be pure in his heart, fully conquered his mind and mastered his senses, etc. Again, Tietke is clearly fulfilling one role in a propaganda system where mud is thrown widely by (preferably) disparate actors in the hope that something will stick even if known to be untrue. Another exercise (in the opposite direction!) that attempts to disconnect ("good") Yoga from Indic tradition and making it Western-inspired is Mark Singleton's book on Yoga (*Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*); it is not discussed further due to lack of space.

Furthermore, Pollock has interpreted many Indic texts, such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as reflective of social oppression and Sanskrit as complicit. Koenraad Elst (2004) writes:

> "Marxists never wonder whether a theory is true or not, they only care about what class interests a theory may serve. Lenin despised a concern for universally valid truth as "bourgeois objectivity"; in this respect, he was the forerunner of postmodern relativism."

Thus, it probably matters little if there is sufficient truth in an analysis or interpretation; it matters only if such an analysis can be used to reduce "oppression" as refracted into the text. Thus, even such propaganda is legitimate, as the end goal is all that is important. Furthermore such propaganda is useful to reduce the discomfort sensitive souls steeped in "Western Universalism" would experience if informed that Nazi holocaust "pre-formed" closer home (given already the sensitivity to oppression in Sanskrit texts). Hence, it is useful to look for Nazi holocaust precursors elsewhere to assuage conscience or as a part of dominant narrative (or equivalently, part of propaganda system) and to preempt the impact of works like Stannard ahead of time. This provides implicit support to "western universalism" by whitewashing European genocides (of Africans/Blacks, Jews, Romas, ...) and explicit support to the demonization of Indic systems. Hence it is important to understand how the propaganda systems work.

Interestingly, Pollock discusses this as part of the same article under consideration in this paper:

> "In German Indology of the NS era, a largely nonscholarly mystical nativism deriving ultimately from a mixture of romanticism and

> protonationalism merged with that objectivism of Wissenschaft earlier described, and together they fostered the ultimate "orientalist" project, the legitimation of genocide. Whatever other enduring lessons this may teach us, it offers a superb illustration of the empirical fact that disinterested scholarship in the human sciences, like any other social act, takes place within the realm of interests; that its objectivity is bounded by subjectivity; and that the only form of it that can appear value-free is the one that conforms fully to the dominant ideology, which alone remains, in the absence of critique, invisible as ideology."
>
> (Pollock 1993:96)

However, stating this does not mean Pollock himself is not serving a propaganda function, ie of tarring a local tradition with Nazism when its intellectual materials have been misconstrued by German Nazis or German Indologists for reasons of settling scores with their bugbears. Note that the word "orientalist" ideally should have been qualified as "European orientalist" here, as historically they were most proficient at genocide (Spanish conquest of Americas, slaving/extermination of blacks or Africans, etc). Using the "orientalist" word colors the mind somehow into thinking that "orientals" are somehow responsible for genocide, hence serves a propaganda function outright. Another instance of this occurs as "In dissecting what accordingly has to be seen as the dominant form of Indianist orientalism..." (Pollock 1993:82); here he is actually discussing German indology and is therefore needlessly confusing.

A Propaganda Model

A good model of a propaganda system is that of Herman and Chomsky (1988). While their model is with respect to mass media, the same analysis is broadly applicable to other manifestations of thought control such as in academia or how Indic systems of thought are portrayed in intellectual circles. It will be helpful to examine the usefulness of this model, after making some of our own changes, for understanding the propaganda against Indic systems of thinking. They write,

> "... based on many years of study of the workings of media, [that it] serve[s] to mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and the private activity, and that their choices, emphases, and

> omissions can often be understood best, and sometimes with striking clarity and thought, by analyzing them in such terms."
>
> (Herman and Chomsky 1988:1)

Their propaganda model views "private media as businesses interested in the sale of a product—readers and audiences—to other businesses (advertisers) rather than that of quality news to the public." The media's "societal purpose", they write, "...[is to serve the] agenda of privileged groups" but the study of [the media] institutions and how they function must be scrupulously ignored, apart from fringe elements or a relatively obscure scholarly literature" (Chomsky 1989:40). The theory postulates five general classes of "filters" that determine the type of news that is presented in news media. These five classes are: Ownership of the medium, Medium's funding sources, Sourcing, Flak and enforcers, Anti-communism and fear ideology [such as "War on Terror" and "counter-terrorism"]. Furthermore, (p.2) "these elements interact with and reinforce each other. The raw material of the news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print."

This theory has to be certainly modified for India with a different set of filters as I am not so much concerned with media exclusively as with thought or knowledge systems (such as Indic, Christian or Islamic) represented in books, academic talks and instruction, plays, blogs etc. here, so this also needs to be modified in the model.

The filters

First, for our purposes of understanding Pollock, one can replace "Anti-communism" with "Anti-Indic" as the concerned media's (world-wide) funding sources is mostly from anti-Indic forces (such as many foreign NGOs, Christian organizations, Islamic sources, etc.). To justify and put this in perspective, first note that funds available to Abrahamic faiths worldwide dwarfs that available to Indic systems. In India itself, as a point of comparison, note that India's total defence allocation (2011-12) was 1,64,000 crores. Foreign-funded NGOs (FFNGOs) in 2011-12 received about 12,000 crores ie. about 7% of India's then defence budget. It is widely believed that the inflow is much larger if non-legal flows as well as funds that come through

UN system are also added to these numbers. It is noteworthy that funds given by UN bodies or World Bank are not under the purview of FCRA (e.g., World Bank funding to GoI in 2013-14 was $5.2 billion (Rs 33000 crore) compared to Rs 12,000 crore ($ 1.8 billion) received by NGOs). Note also that the majority of donors including the top three are church-based organizations. It is therefore not surprising that any malfeasance regarding foreign NGOs or Christian/Islamic organizations in India do not find a receptive environment and gets attenuated in public discourse very quickly while anything anti-Indic can be played and replayed till it becomes centre-stage. Hence replacing the anti-communism filter with an anti-Indic filter is justifiable with respect to topics under discussion in this paper.

Let us now consider other filters. First, "ownership/control of the medium". Even to this day, the media, the judiciary, the NGO sector or the education sector in India are owned or populated by a substantial anti-Indic elite. A good illustration is the recent "Award-wapsi" events (2015) or supposed attacks on Church properties (2014) where minor or not so important events were magnified to hog all mindspace in the print and TV media. On the contrary, substantial damage, destruction related to Indic sphere (a good example: temples in Kashmir), or killings/murders/exile of those in the Indic camp (again, Kashmiri pandits) are/were barely covered. At the international level, it is even more pronounced: all major newspapers in US/UK, e.g., NYT/BBC[9], regularly write highly negative or stereotyped accounts of happenings in India.

Next, the funding sources as filter. The model posits that the "people buying the media products (newspapers, magazines, TV) are the product that is sold to the businesses that buy advertising space; the "news" has only a marginal role as the product". The situation is a bit different in India compared to US where private property is more important. In India, due to the domination of the Nehru family for a better part of the last 7 decades, and limited availability of advertisements or newsprint, only news that reflected this family's interests or did not negatively affect it could be printed to continue to get Government advertisements, and journalists would also get privileged access (e.g., on PM's plane on trips abroad) or freeloading in terms of 5 star hotel stays or food, or even plots of land at throwaway prices. Therefore, much of the news reported had to make the Nehru family look good at least in the first 3-4 decades after independence.

Here, news could be said to be marginal product of making the political families look good.

Against this, funding related to Indic activities is either at a cottage industry level (highly localised or, worse, disorganized and possibly even harmful sometimes) or actually in the hands of the anti-Indic elements. Much of the temple wealth has been neutralized as the rich temples have been taken over by the Government and the temple ecosystem has been run to the ground or actually to fund the anti-Indic forces. Additionally, Church-related or Saudi Arabian funds are highly visible; almost any drive across any major highway in South India should be sufficient visual proof. Bollywood seems to have been under some Dubai/Pakistan or other Islamic connections for some time; however, after the Vajpayee government declared it as an industry, bank loans have became possible and the role of tainted or black money is becoming a little less. Furthermore, many intellectuals seem to be under the grip of Western interests (either due to direct funding or indirectly through awards, scholarships, and such). Consider the recent award of Magsaysay award to a Karnatic musician; the award citation specifically states that it is for 'ensuring social inclusiveness in culture', a surprise as many *varṇa-s* and *jāti-s* (example, MS Subbulakshmi, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu, K J Yesudas, Rajaratnam Pillai, Sheik Chinna Moulana, etc) are/were stars in the field in addition to the (demonized) Brāhmaṇa-s; the citation says further that "He saw that his was a caste-dominated art that fostered an unjust, hierarchic order by effectively excluding the lower classes from sharing in a vital part of India's cultural legacy" (See "Thodur Madabusi Krishna"). Such motivated awards are de rigueur now from Western-inspired agencies and serve to deepen social cleavages in areas where not noticeable before; note also the award winner's use of the word "caste" in approved ways. No wonder that anti-Indic stories get maximum play in print and TV media in India (this might be becoming just a bit less after 2 years of Modi's government and the increasing untenability of the anti-Indic story line applied indiscriminately in news events and their consequent exposure in the social media).

With respect to the next filter (sourcing), "the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest." In our case, US universities have dedicated departments to study Indic religions but, due to convenient concerns about "secularism", Hindu or Indic religions cannot be studied or encouraged to be studied as such in Indian universities. This is probably due to the excessive caution of the executive as the Constitution of India lists "to develop scientific temper" as one of the fundamental duties of Indian citizens (but surprisingly seems to be restricted only to the Indic community). Hence the sourcing issue is important as (small) armies of US scholars study Indic religions with all their biases intact and fill up the intellectual space with their writings. Since the Indic scholars cannot be supported by the formal research organizations in India, research output in this sector in India resembles at the most a cottage industry with sporadic or poor quality writings. It is often said that Sanskrit study is better done outside India even when native scholars that remain are outstanding! The end result is that US universities decide the course of research on Indic issues and native Sanskrit/native language scholarship counts for nothing. As Rajiv Malhotra and his colleagues have documented in *Invading the Sacred*, native informants are used sometimes by European/American academics to extract information that end up being used in surprisingly twisted ways.

Next, the flak or enforcer filter employed against Indic systems. "If flak is produced on a large scale, or by individuals or groups with substantial resources, it can be both uncomfortable and costly to the media". Here flak is what makes receptivity difficult to all shades of thought including Indic perspectives, and how flak is orchestrated for specific purposes. Specifically, flak here is essentially the hostility to the Indic perspective or showing it up for its non-"coolness", or that squelches uncomfortable questions about received models of understanding (e.g., "Modi a butcher or murderer"). A good example is the invisibility and lack of positions in Indian academia for people with Indic focus in the social sciences area; flak ensures that they cannot survive in the hostile environment. Madhu Kishwar became *persona non grata* once she started research on understanding why Modi was being demonized incessantly and wrote the book *'Modi, Muslims and Media'*. As another example of flak, she found it difficult to find a publisher for her book (and had to publish it herself) or launch her book in Delhi (2013) as no Indian Government funded social research body would provide the venue or, having promised a venue, would invariably cancel at the last minute.

For fear ideology in the model, one can list RSS/BJP demonization, "Hindutva", "right wing fascism", human rights violations (atrocity literature (Malhotra et al 2011)), academic Hinduphobia (Malhotra 2016) as exemplars.

Validation of the Model

While this is non-trivial, the last 2 decades has shown the issues in sharp detail. For the first time since 1947 political formations with sympathy for or support of Indic peoples are serious contenders for power (in some states) or in power (at the centre or in some states). The propaganda system against the Indic people finds this unacceptable and has used every means available to contain it, the most notable example being the demonization of Modi starting from about 2002 and continuing even now. I discuss this briefly due to lack of space; there are also many published works on the subject (e.g., early works such as those by Dayanand Saraswati, Vivekananda, Sita Ram Goel, and more recent works —such as by Rajiv Malhotra (*Invading the Sacred; Breaking India* (with Arvind Neelakandan); *Academic Hinduphobia*); by Madhu Kishwar (*Zealous Reformers; Deadly Laws: Battling Stereotypes; Modi, Muslims and Media*), or the works of S N Balagangadhara. Some well known issues are the following:

1. how Ishrat encounter case was reported compared to Sadhvi Pragya's imprisonment and torture

2. temples under government control and their ruination. Once upon a time, temples were the centers of learning, culture and *svādhyāya* (study of self). Government control has made temples vacate its role in learning and culture, leaving only a shell under an unfriendly bureaucratic management and thus is so unsatisfactory that going to temples is now a chore, given the opportunistic developments and land grabbing around the temples and the resulting noise and pollution. Propagation of Dharmic activity through the temples is no longer easy given that a parasitic bureaucracy decides what can be done.

3. the sorry state of Indic languages, especially Sanskrit.

4. legal interference in many Indic traditions (e.g., *Sādhu*-s in principle could be classed as "vagrants" under still not-repealed British Raj regulations and hence confined), Jain practice of *santara* (voluntary death by fasting) declared illegal suddenly, patronizing judicial pronunciations against customary practices in places of worship.

5. given the "no-interference" or "no-go" policy of Nehruvian policies with respect to personal laws of "minorities" (an excessive caution given that the constitution of India recognises minority entitlements with respect to educational institutions only, minority being either linguistic or religious), NGOs and others have felt no restraint in proposing and effecting legal remedies for the Indic peoples without any balance (going against the principle of natural justice where an accused has to prove his innocence rather than the accusing party) such as mindlessly stringent dowry laws that criminalizes the man's side of the family without due process, attempted legislation with respect to rape in marriage or with respect to divorce, attempted legislation on communal violence that makes only the "majority" community responsible, etc. The Indian state has been derelict in outsourcing legislative wisdom to favoured NGOs with its most egregious form during the UPA rule (2004-2014) through the National Advisory Council, initially not even a legal entity, that resulted in a dyarchy where power was exercised without responsibility.

Pollock and the Propaganda Model

The following can be cited to show that the model is useful with respect to Pollock:

1. The Anti-Indic perspective of Pollock is clear going by his writings. He has written about the oppression in the Sanskrit cosmopolis as well as being part of campaigns against Hindutva and other issues as a "concerned Sanskritist". There is no sense of sacred in his view of Sanskrit philology as *The Battle for Sanskrit* by Rajiv Malhotra clearly shows. While he has opined that Sanskrit is dead, he still wants to flog a "dead horse" going by his enormous output; what for?

2. The sourcing aspect (availability of intellectual materials) is clear as the major visible centers of formal intellectual Sanskrit scholarship has moved to the West (US, Germany) such as at Ivy schools. Students from India go to these centers for higher studies without any serious connection with local Indic scholarly community.

3. The funding aspect is also clear: Government of India has for all practical purposes refused to fund "religion" based studies, especially Indic ones and the only funds available are dispersed/local. While funds for such studies are also not that easy in US/Europe, the funds available at Ivy schools are still much larger and more consistent than what are available in India.

4. The flak is contributed by many of Pollock's supporters or his students, professional bodies like RISA/AAR, Left and Abrahamic supporters in the media in India and elsewhere. Note also the example of the two Yoga instructors (Mathias Tierce and Mark Singleton) given earlier.

The Reality of anti-Indic Propaganda and Its Counter

Given the propaganda system in operation, it is clear that Indic systems will be at the receiving end. There has been and will in future be disinformation, "digestion", defamation, victimization/intimidation, attempted starving of funds, etc. Given this reality, what are the options open to us now? There are some heavy handed approaches such as trying to pass anti-defamation[10], anti-hate laws just like anti-dowry, anti-SC/ST atrocities laws[11], etc. but these are generally problematic and often indefensible (e.g., due to the burden of proof on accused, reversing standard jurisprudence). Getting sufficient support in the legislatures may also be quite difficult for the Indic case. Or one can use the country's existing laws such as under Section 295A of Indian Penal Code, which forbids "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage the feelings of any religious community," just as Batra used it against Doniger's book; this is also problematic as such laws can also interfere with sincere and incisive discussions. While poison pills

(Malhotra 2014:300) and such other interesting ideas (just like copyleft in software) are useful in protecting one set of truth claims against another, they do not protect the replication mechanisms for such ideas themselves and hence need some complementary support.

One approach also could be the use of (IPR) laws on moral rights (especially the part concerning right to the integrity of the work). These guarantee that a work cannot be "modified" (for example intentionally mistranslate a book) to bring the original author into disrepute. However, these do not work as the works in question, e.g., *Gītā*, are typically many centuries old and we are also discussing a philological collection. Essentially, many Indic works/thought systems are in the public domain with no tangible "author".

The best course seems to be to work with available means for redress (e.g., with the recent California text book hearings) but many systems may not be as open as necessary for redress in numerous cases. In such cases mobilization and protest remain the only choices.

Another approach is using the model available in the free software community. Here technical competence and meritocracy matter; if one is not able to produce the free software required for a particular purpose, that inability makes that person incapable of affecting further decisions viz "We reject kings, presidents and voting. We believe in rough consensus and running code" (Dave Clark). Since some model of effectiveness is available in the world of (computer) code to a reasonable extent across the world, this perspective is feasible. If such a model of effectiveness is available in matters largely affecting Indic persons, those with effective solutions can be said to have "*adhikāra*".

However, in the battle against anti-Indic propaganda, we typically only have "truth claims". (If they involve only "facts", standard methods may be good enough.) How do we judge effectiveness of an argument? When does criticism cross the line and become propaganda? Who can speak for or provide critical perspectives on Indic models? Could this be how well such perspectives or criticisms are received by Indic populace? Is this akin to the notion of *adhikāra* present already in the tradition? Or, does this mean those that help the Indic community in a significant way (e.g., Baba Ramdev, or Sri Sri Ravishankar) or those who are perceived to be effective widely have the "*adhikāra*" and not others? If alternative communities without connection with "original" ones (for example, a Yoga school outside India) are in the picture, what right do they have in interpreting tradition? Is the *adhikāra* is to be negotiated, not asserted? Are the moral rights to be acknowledged? Given Rajiv Malhotra's extensive documentation of "digestion" of Indic systems by powerful forces outside the Indic sphere, these are not minor issues and such issues may well actually decide the trajectory of the Indic universe.

Note that in some other areas of IPR there has been movement already such as in geographical indicators (basmati rice is a good example; it can only be product from the Indian subcontinent) or in biodiversity (where there is some protection from exploitation of rare flora and fauna); misrepresentation attracts legal penalties. Note that this problem is also faced by traditional knowledge systems worldwide. While issues affecting traditional knowledge have been studied well in the last few decades, in India at least, some motivated researchers have minimized them or put these systems as existing in opposition to Indic systems due to fears of "Hindutva" and the like (for example, see Neelakandan's discussion with respect to criticism against "Ayurgenomics" (Neelakandan 2016)). We may need to see how traditional knowledge (e.g., use of turmeric) has been protected and possibly explore extending an appropriate model to the Indic world also. This has major implications for Indic systems as many of them are in the informal domain and hence are subject to capture, disinformation or "digestion". It is clear that the above questions need to be investigated carefully; we have only scratched the surface.

In Pollock's case, does his political or ideological perspectives (e.g., Marxist-like or "Western Universalist" perspective) preclude any *adhikāra*? Given the open-ended aspect of lived life, such a restrictive perspective or model also seems problematic. Caraka, for example, says

> *kṛtsno hi loko buddhimatām ācāryaḥ, śatruś cābuddhimatām*
>
> *ataś cābhisamīkṣya buddhimatā'mitrasyāpi dhanyaṁ yaśasyam āyuṣyaṁ pāuṣṭikaṁ lokyam abhyupadiśato vacaḥ śrotavyam anuvidhātavyaṁ ceti*
>
> *(Carakasaṁhitā 8.14)*
>
> "...the whole world is teacher for the wise and an enemy for the foolish. Therefore, the wise, after careful examination, learn even from rivals about excellence, fame, long life, health, and of world affairs by listening to their words of instruction and assimilating them".

A better approach or perspective may therefore be that already present in *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (Śikṣā Valli, Anuvāka 11) that says (repeated here for emphasis),

> *yāny anavadyāni karmāṇi | tāni sevitavyāni | no itarāṇi |*
>
> Follow only such actions that 'are untainted', not any other.
>
> *yāny asmākaṁ sucaritāni tāni tvayopāsyāni | no itarāṇi |*
>
> Whatever is good in us, follow those, not any other.
>
> *ye ke cāsmacchreyāṁso brāhmaṇāḥ | teṣāṁ tvayā"sanena praśvasitavyam |*
>
> If there are any better brāhmaṇa-s, offer them a seat and "don't so much as breathe"!

Conclusions

In this paper, we have explored one paper of Pollock that touches on German Indology, Sanskrit and the Nazi ideology and attempted to show its connection with a propaganda system as the best explanation available. Further work is needed to empirically substantiate some aspects of the model (for example, funding, sourcing aspects from funding agencies as well establish the number and nature of "flak enforcers" in news media as well newer media such as social media). The intersection of propaganda, anti-Indic bias as well as legal remedies also have been sketched briefly; this needs more serious work.

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Endnotes

[1] available at `https://www.academia.edu/2242722/Orientalism_and_the_postcolonial_predicament_perspectives_on_South_Asia`); note that this pdf file has some infirmities (word spacing problems, etc) but this is not a problem for the arguments in this paper.

[2] See "Pope Benedict XVI reflects on life under Hitler's Nazi Party".

[3] See "ADL Welcomes Election of Cardinal Ratzinger as New Pope".

[4] See also "The German Churches and The Nazi State".

[5] See also Sofair and Kaldjian LC (2000) and also Roelcke (2002)

[6] See Davis(2001). Also see Dutt (1900), Paul (1900), Ghosh (1944). For Ireland, see Woodham-Smith (1962).

[7] See "ADL Welcomes Election of Cardinal Ratzinger as New Pope".

[8] See Coalition Against Genocide (2005).

[9] For NYT, for a good summary, see `https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Indian_sentiment\#New_York_Times` (accessed Jul 28, 2016). For BBC see, Alasdair Pinkerton (Oct 2008). "A new kind of imperialism? The BBC, cold war broadcasting and the contested geopolitics of South Asia". Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television 28 (4): 537–555. This is a peer-reviewed article that analyses BBC Indian coverage from independence through 2008; it concludes that BBC coverage of South Asian geopolitics and economics has had a pervasive Indophobic slant.

[10] The Indian legal system also has a defamation model but seems too stringent; hence, Subramanian Swamy's recent attempt to make it more helpful with respect to freedom of expression. The Jewish Anti-Defamation League is a successful "pressure group" approach that might be useful to consider in the Indic context.

[11] For example, if we need to develop a proper critique of Ambedkar or other leaders in SC/ST community, we have a big problem as of now. Due to 4 (v) of Jan 1, 2016 - NO. 1 OF 2016. [31st December, 2015.] An Act to amend the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (www.indiacode.nic.in/acts-in-pdf/2016/201601.pdf) passed only recently by both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, if you "by words either written or spoken or by any other means disrespects any late person held in high esteem by members of the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes" then it "shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to five years and with fine."

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Chapter 2

A *pūrva-pakṣa* of "Deep Orientalism?"

– ***Ashay Naik***

Abstract

This paper is an attempt at a *prima facie "pūrva-pakṣa"* analysis of "Deep Orientalism?"[1] – an essay authored by Sheldon Pollock and published in *Orientalism and Postcolonial Predicament (1993)* – an anthology of writings concerned with the issues facing Indian studies in the wake of the Orientalist critique – edited by Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer. The declared aims of Pollock's essay are two-fold. Firstly, it seeks to analyse using the framework of Orientalism the collaboration between German Indology and the Nazi regime (1933-45), on the one hand; and the role of Sanskrit knowledge in the "pre-colonial forms of domination" in India, on the other. Secondly, in the light of the alleged realization - that both Indology itself, as well as its object of study (i.e. Sanskrit knowledge) have been deeply implicated in power - it proposes a critical Indology for the future that will be resistant towards imperialism, or at least not act in collaboration with it. Thus, there is a descriptive and a prescriptive component to Pollock's essay. The purpose of this *pūrva-pakṣa* is, firstly, to explain the comparative morphology of domination attempted by Pollock and expose its limitations; secondly, to interrogate the implications of the critical Indology proposed by Pollock for the study of the Sanskritic heritage. Although Pollock has not stated it explicitly as the objective of his essay, it is alleged by some that he seeks to

establish a causal connection between Sanskrit thought and the forms of domination evident in colonialism and Nazism[2]. The *pūrva-pakṣa* will also investigate this allegation and discuss how the comparative morphology of domination makes such a reading ineluctable even if it may not be the express intent of the author himself.

Introduction

Pollock announces at the outset that his essay attempts to bring together German and Sanskrit knowledge-power nexuses within the framework of "Orientalism" – the prototypical knowledge-power nexus which interrogates the collaboration between British Orientalism and British colonialism – as a result of which they get projected as "Orientalisms" in their own right. And in conclusion, he reflects on the challenges and promises of a new Indology in the wake of the transcended "Orientalist" one, which, inasmuch as it will be driven by American scholars like Pollock, could as well be understood as American Orientalism. I have thus organized the *pūrva-pakṣa* in terms of these four alleged forms of Orientalism – the British, the German, the Sanskrit and the American.

British Orientalism

There was a time when the concept of Orientalism meant simply the study of Asian languages and cultures but Edward Said (1978) gave the term a polemical twist while yet retaining its original sense and this inversion has been the cause of great confusion[3] which is evident in Pollock's essay as well.

Three Senses

Said offers at least three "interdependent" meanings of Orientalism:

> (a) Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient . . . either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism.
>
> (b) Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident."

> (c) Taking the late eighteenth century as *a very roughly defined starting point* Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, *Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.* (Said 1978: 2-3, italics mine)

Right off the bat we can see that in the first two meanings we are talking about Orientalism as general and trans-historical, while in the third it comes across as specific and historical. The former is purely epistemological and covers the whole gamut of what has been said by the West about the East as an entity different from itself right from the time of the ancient Greeks. The latter, on the other hand, is heavily implicated in power, sponsored by power and intended to secure and expand power.

Said has not distinguished between these two processes of knowledge production and this apparent oversight is what lies, in my view, at the heart of all the controversy surrounding the concept of Orientalism.

Three Scopes

Corresponding to the three meanings of Orientalism, Said also provides three different scopes for the knowledge which can be considered Orientalist. Thus, at one point he says:

> Strictly speaking, Orientalism is a field of learned study. In the Christian West, Orientalism is considered *to have commenced its formal existence* with the decision of the Church Council of Vienne in 1312 to establish a series of chairs in "Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon, and Salamanca" (Said 1978:49-50, italics mine).

This agrees well with the first meaning of Orientalism given above. Further, with regards to the second meaning of marking a distinction between the Orient and the Occident, he says:

> A very large mass of writers ... have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on. This Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx. (Said 1978:2–3)

This suggests that even ancient Greek works such as produced by Aeschylus can be regarded as Orientalist. On the other hand, with regard to the third meaning of Orientalism as a post-eighteenth century phenomenon linked with colonialism, he says:

> Britain and France were *the pioneer nations in the Orient and in Oriental studies* . . . [and] these vanguard positions were held by virtue of the two greatest colonial networks in pre-twentieth-century history (Said 1978:17, italics mine).

When we consider Said's assertion that all the three meanings are "interdependent" it becomes evident that *all* the knowledge which Europe has produced about the Orient, from the beginning of its history, is Orientalist in his view i.e. tainted by a lust for domination and asseverated from a position of superiority. I think he has concentrated specifically on British and French Orientalism in the colonial period because (to use Pollock's own eloquent words) "it offers an extreme and often transparent instance of knowledge generating and sustaining power and the domination that defines it" (Pollock 1993:77). In addition, it connects seamlessly with American Orientalism which – in my view – is the real target of his book[4]. But it is evident that for Said, Orientalism is an essential feature of European knowledge production about Asia as he links it with the very character of European culture:

> It is hegemony, or rather the result of cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and the strength . . . Orientalism is never far from . . . the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness. (Said 1978:7)

This detour into Said's *Orientalism* was necessary to clear up some of the confusion that confronts us in Pollock's essay right at the beginning. Pollock (1993) has understood Orientalism only in terms of its third meaning given above i.e. as a process of knowledge-production necessarily connected with colonialism. He has therefore felt it necessary to make adjustments to this concept so that it can include German Orientalism and Sanskrit knowledge, neither of which were involved in colonialism. In the case of the former, he suggests that its vector should be conceived as directed inwards "towards the colonization and domination of Europe itself" (Pollock 1993:77) while, to accommodate the latter, Orientalism should be understood simply as a "discourse of power that divides the world into 'betters and lessers' and thus facilitates the domination ... of any group" *(ibid)*. Having thus over-generalized (and consequently trivialized) the scope of Orientalism to include knowledge produced in the service of any and every kind of domination, he suggests that "Orientalist constructions in the service of colonial domination may be only a specific historical instance of a larger, transhistorical, albeit locally inflected, interaction of knowledge and power" (Pollock 1993:76).

These two adjustments suggested by Pollock to the concept of Orientalism – the multi-directionality of its vector and its trans-historicization to include any discourse about "betters and lessers"– are both misleading in my view, and arise from his failure to understand Said's thesis, as outlined above. This is because Orientalism, according to Said, was always trans-historical and yet exclusively European. While Said is typically ambivalent about his exclusion of German Orientalism[5], his central point was: "German Orientalism had in common with Anglo-French and later American Orientalism ... a kind of intellectual *authority* over the Orient within Western culture" (1978:19, italics original). Ultimately Orientalism is all about the *authority* which the West has wielded against the East right from the very start, as a result of which, in Said's view, the whole corpus of European knowledge about the Orient stands implicated as Orientalist.

Pollock's fundamental error, as of most readers of Said, is that they focus on the connection forged by the latter between Anglo-French Orientalism and Anglo-French colonialism and then wonder what to make of the Orientalisms of other European nations whose colonial enterprise was relatively limited. But one doesn't have to go looking for the *real* subject peoples of a given Orientalism such that if one cannot be found externally, then one would need to be conceived of internally, as Pollock has done in the case of German Orientalism. For Said, Orientalism was already a trans-historical European phenomenon. The Anglo-French colonialism was only a local inflection (to borrow Pollock's term), a historical moment when the sense of domination inherent in Orientalism came into contact with real domination in the form of colonialism. But what Said is telling us is that the sense of domination over the Orient was always there right from the time when Europe conceived of itself as different and as superior to the Orient. The actualization of this hegemony in the form of Anglo-French colonialism only provides a fruitful ground for a study of how it shaped real domination but it does not need colonial actualization for its existence because it has always been there as "the major component in European culture." When Germans began their study of the Orient, they did it in the same Orientalist way as the English and the French. They also objectified an 'Orient' and asserted their superiority over it by claiming their 'knowledge' of it as authoritative. This is what, according to Said, makes their scholarship Orientalist (in the polemical sense).

Given the exclusively European connotations of Orientalism, it cannot be universalized to include all discourses about "betters and lessers" and thus extended to Sanskrit knowledge. Said (1989:208) himself has used this phrase specifically to refer to the divide that yet separates the colonized from their erstwhile colonizers even after the end of colonialism. Its over-generalization leads not only to loss of historical specificity (for which Pollock duly apologizes in the essay) but even more importantly, cultural specificity – the hegemony of European epistemological categories. This is not to suggest that discrimination is not to be found in Sanskrit knowledge but it would have to be understood in the specific context of Indian culture. To regard it as Orientalist is to make the error that the knowledge, and its effects, produced by a *brāhmaṇa* out of a sense of superiority over the *śūdra* or the *mleccha*, are analogous to the knowledge, and its effects, produced by a European out of a sense of superiority over the Oriental.

None of the foregoing – I should concede in the end – should be read as a defence of Said's *Orientalism* from Pollock's distortion. My point is simply that if one does use the Saidian thesis as a point of departure – as Pollock clearly does – then one cannot make the kind of adjustments he suggests, to attain the goals which he desires. In my view, both Said's *Orientalism*(1978) and Pollock's *Deep Orientalism?*(1993) suffer from the same pathology of a hermeneutic of suspicion taken to an excess. As Marchand (2009: xxvi) has expressed it passionately in her defence of German Orientalism against the Saidian thesis:

> I find presumptuous and rather condescending the conception ... that all knowledge is power, especially since the prevailing way of understanding this formulation suggests that power is something sinister and oppressive, something exerted against or over others. Of course, knowledge can be used in this way, but knowledge as understanding can also lead to appreciation, dialogue, self-critique, perspectival reorientation, and personal and cultural enrichment. Oriental studies did partake of and contribute to the exploitation and "othering" of non-westerners . . . but it also has led to positive outcomes . . . and I cannot subscribe to a philosophical stance that suggests that such things do not motivate or characterize the pursuit of knowledge.

German Orientalism

German Indology is depicted by Pollock as having proceeded along two lines – a romantic quest for identity and a scholarship that privileged scientific methods *(Wissenschaft)* – which interpenetrated in the period of Nazi Germany to become its intellectual foundation. He then offers some particular instances of contributions made by Germany Indologists such as Walther Wüst and Erich Frauwallner and the investments made by Nazi Germany in their field of study. All the data provided by Pollock to construct this narrative has been disputed by Grünendahl (2012); and to avoid prolixity, I will not repeat his meticulous analysis here but only point out his conclusion which is that "Pollock's master narrative . . . rest[s] on unsubstantiated claims, presumptions and misrepresentations" (227). Instead, I will pursue a different strategy.

The connection Pollock has attempted to forge between German Indology and Nazi Germany betokens the methodological problem of his essay. Two diverse strands are here brought into juxtaposition with each other to erect the façade of mutual reinforcement and affirmation without paying much attention to the larger whole of which they were constituent parts. This approach suffers from the problem of missing the forest for the trees by its exclusive focus on the mere trees – the inter-relationship between German Indology and Nazi Germany. However, when we do switch our attention to the forest, we realize how vast and complicated it is such that the role of German Indology becomes hardly discernible, which explains why it gets barely a mention in the historiography of this period, notwithstanding its colossal size, given the epochal consequences of

Nazi Germany. It is impossible for me to contextualize within the limits of this paper in detail either German Indology or Nazi Germany; and what follows is merely a threadbare account of the reflection of various experts on this subject but hopefully it should be enough to put their interrelationship in a proper perspective.

We will focus on two areas which are of central concern in Pollock's essay: the discourse about "betters and lessers," which in this case takes the form of a dichotomy between Indo-German Aryan and Semite, and the inward vector of its domination which makes it "Orientalist." First of all, we may note that Thomas Trautmann (1997:211-16) and Edwin Bryant (2001:60-2) have persuasively argued against Max Müller's interpretation of the Dasas/Dasyus as a nose-less, black-skinned people racially different from the Aryans. As Marchand points out:

> Sheldon Pollock's argument in his essay "Deep Orientalism" that some of the racism in the term "Arya" was already imbedded in ancient Indian texts has been modified by Bryant and Trautmann, who have shown just how much "reading in" was necessary to wrench a racial contest between higher, lighter people, and lower, darker ones out of the ancient Indian texts"
> (Marchand 2009:128).

On the other hand, antisemitism has been a characteristic feature of European culture since ancient times. What we find in the modern period is only the rationalist and racist variety of an antisemitism which had prevailed in Europe in the Christian and pagan times as well. The roots of modern antisemitism lie not in German Indology but in the views of Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire, whose ire against Judaism was a subset of his antipathy towards the Church and it is this dissatisfaction with Semitic religion which led to his projection of Vedic thought as a viable alternative and of the mythic Aryan Brahmin as its ideal practitioner, who was a foil against both the "plagiarist" Jew and the "degenerate" Indian (Figuera 2002:10ff). While Christianity was denounced, antisemitism survived because its pagan variant was recalled through the discovery of Greco-Roman knowledge.

> By bringing classical antisemitism into the post-Christian rationalist thought of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Voltaire enabled it to be grafted on to medieval Christian stereotypes, providing a new, international, secular anti-Jewish rhetoric in the name of European culture.
> (Hellig 2003:271)

The cause of a German nationalism fostered by Johan Gottfried Herder's idea of a *Volksgeist* (a national spirit or genius) and the alleged superiority of Aryan languages over Semites, and hence of their speakers, as proposed by German Indologists such as Friedrich Schlegel and Christian Lassen were important but not the only factors favouring antisemitism in this period. The French theologian Ernest Renan divested Jesus of his Jewishness and made him an Aryan figure. He declared himself to be the first at having recognized the superiority of the Indo-European over the Semite race (Hellig 2003:276). Another Frenchman, Gobineau contributed significantly to the development of race theory but was not himself anti-Jewish. His work, however, proved influential to the promotion of German antisemitism through Richard Wagner and Houston Chamberlain. Likewise, with "the publication of Darwin's ideas in 1859 . . . the biologist Ernst Haeckel . . . became Germany's chief apostle of social Darwinism popularizing Darwin's ideas by applying them to the development of civilization" (Hellig 2003:280-1). Thus, we find that in the nineteenth century German Indology was only one of diverse fields – nationalism, race theory, Christian historical criticism, Darwinism – which were developing independently all over Europe and nourishing German antisemitism in their own way. Further, German Indologists were not the only "bad" guys: "contributions to racist antisemitism came from many sources – professors, journalists, clergymen, statesmen, philosophers – and in Germany the antisemitic movement took to the streets, reaching a climax in 1881" (Hellig 2003:271).

Pollock mentions in passing that the dichotomization between Indo-German Aryan and Semite was "called into being by the social and economic emancipation of Jews" (Pollock 1993:82) but immediately suggests that it was "Orientalist" knowledge which made it possible. Thus, he ignores the problems relating to Jewish emancipation as the cause of antisemitism. Jewish emancipation refers to the process of integrating Jews into the wider Christian society which occurred in light of the egalitarian ideals of Enlightenment. Previously, they held the status of tolerated aliens living on the fringes of society as self-governing communities. But emancipation carried the cost of relinquishing their Jewish particularities and adopting the cultural norms of Enlightenment society (Hellig 2003:256ff). While the Jews did enter into public life and began to occupy prominent positions as equal citizens, they were unwilling or unable to cease being a distinctive community unto themselves – a nation within a nation – which was unacceptable, especially in Germany where nationalism came to be shaped not through fulfilment of rational obligations, but through participation in the Romantic ideals of the inner spirit of the *Volk*. The theorization of a racial divide between Indo-German Aryans and Semites in this period was problematic not so much for the "Orientalist" inferiorization of the latter – since in European history the Jews have always been an inferiorized people. It is only when this inferiorization took on a racial colour i.e. when the inferior qualities attributed to the Jews came to be seen as their immutable racial traits that it became evident that emancipation could locate them within German society as equal citizens but never integrate them as such. These two limitations – adherence to their unique cultural identity on the part of the Jews and racial antisemitism on the part of the Germans – made their expulsion from the body politic seem necessary to Germans such as Hitler; and when no nation showed willingness to grant them refuge[6], total annihilation became the final solution of the Jewish question. One way to understand this problem of Jewish emancipation is to note that the earlier – Christian – understanding of the Jews, instituted a division between "betters and lessers"; and this, preposterous as it may sound, would have to be read as a kind of "Orientalism," if we follow Pollock's definition of the term. On the other hand, Jewish emancipation was an attempt to make them a "better"[7] people; and what we discern is that such betterment comes at a steep cultural cost, which, if one is not willing to fully pay, transforms one from a tolerated, albeit inferiorized, outsider into an "abject" insider[8]; one who therefore comes to be seen as so dangerous as to be considered deserving of total annihilation. These are the kind of complexities involved in the inter-relationships of human groups which get glossed over by Pollock's ridiculous adaptation of Orientalism.

Pollock has referred to "the legitimation of genocide" as the "ultimate 'Orientalist' project" (Pollock 1993:96) but as the foregoing paragraphs show "Orientalism" cannot even be regarded as a primary factor in the rise of modern antisemitism, which in turn cannot be regarded as a sufficient condition for the Holocaust. Pollock only pays lip service to the difference between Functionalist and Intentionalist (Pollock uses the term "idealist") approaches in Nazi historiography (1993:88). His contention that Intentionalist views "seem to have gained at least parity in current re-thinking in the historiography of the movement . . . in part attributable to the fuller history of the Holocaust now available" *(ibid)* is mere hand-waving since he would like to pin the blame fundamentally on the "ideational dimension" of Orientalist knowledge. He is careful not to inform his readers that the Functionalist historians have argued that Hitler was a lazy and weak dictator, driven by historical circumstances, and that war and genocide were the result of the "cumulative radicalization" arising from the chaotic and competitive nature of the Nazi state apparatus rather than from a specific ideology (Mason 1995:212ff).

Matters get even more complicated as precedents to Nazi atrocities can be found not only in the pogroms of the Soviet *kulaks* and the Armenians, but in the Herero and Nama genocides (1904–07) perpetrated by Germany itself in its South-West African colonies. There is, first of all, the controversy known as *Historikerstreit* about whether the Nazi period (1933–45) should be cordoned off as a unique event in German history lest its historicization leads to the normalization and trivialization of the Holocaust, or whether it should be viewed as the end product of a way of modernization that was unique (Sonderweg[9]) to Germany and different from other European nations. There is further controversy on whether the German colonial genocide is to be causally connected with the Holocaust or not and whether this connection, if accepted, should be treated as supporting the Sonderweg thesis or not. Needless to say, in none of these historiographies does German Orientalism figure anywhere at all. Fitzpatrick (2008) who has done an excellent survey of these various positions, concludes that European colonialism produced initially a hierarchical racism based on socio-political differences but as miscegenation tended to blur the difference between ruler and ruled, a biological racism arose in the colonial milieu which treated the Mischlinge (mixed blood) as the abject entity which polluted the self. It was this biological racism, which developed in the context of colonialism, which was exported back to Europe. While all European colonial nations were equally affected by this problem, the German case was peculiar – not necessarily due to Sonderweg – but because its defeat in the first World War brought its colonial adventure to an abrupt halt:

> With colonialism suppressed by the victorious French and British, it was transformed into a vehicle for a hypertrophic expansionist

> nationalism that sought internal as well as external grounds for the catastrophic failure of the German nation-state to maintain parity with or hegemony over other European powers . . . Upon its return to Europe, expansionism predicated on racial difference was fundamentally altered, with "inner," biological categories of difference inferred in a colonial discourse tailored for Europe, where external markers of racial difference were not apparent and would therefore not serve the purpose of imperial social stratification. New biological categories were consolidated – a biologically inferior alterity – the "Asiatic" Slav, and an abject, polluting, debased German self, the biologically deficient but nonetheless assimilated "Germanic Jew" . . . One was to be conquered and ruled, even at the risk of a war of annihilation. The other was simply to be eliminated ruthlessly, expelled from the body politic
>
> (Fitzpatrick 2008:500-1).

This is exactly the same as the inward vector of German domination specified by Pollock but the various scholars whose views Fitzpatrick has summarized – Jürgen Zimmerer, Isabel Hull, Benjamin Madley, Pascal Grosse, Hannah Arendt, and others – have traced the problem to German colonialism and its military competition with other European powers, rather than to German Orientalism. What becomes evident from the foregoing is that the history of modern Germany which forms the overarching context of German Indology is a highly complex subject and a myriad factors have contributed to the rise of Nazi Germany and its agenda of war and genocide. By completely ignoring this context and fixating upon German Indology alone and the collaboration between some German Indologists and the Nazi regime, Pollock misleads his readers into ascribing it an exaggerated role in the history of Nazism. But maybe that is his goal – not so much to incriminate German Indology itself as the Sanskrit knowledge which was its object of study.

Pollock (1993:83) suggests that in the Nazi period, the two limbs of German Orientalism viz. romanticism and *Wissenschaft*, merged to become the official worldview of the state and "fostered the ultimate 'Orientalist' project, the legitimation of genocide." What made this interpenetration possible was, according to him, the conceptual framework of a facts-based, value-free, objective scholarship which sought to transcend political values:

> It offers a superb illustration of the empirical fact that disinterested scholarship in the human sciences, like any other social act, takes

> place within the realm of interests; that its objectivity is bounded by subjectivity; and that the only form of it that can appear value-free is the one that conforms fully to the dominant ideology, which alone remains, in the absence of critique, invisible as ideology (Pollock 1993:96).

This denunciation of objective scholarship and the corresponding valorisation of a "morally sensitive scholarship" shows that for Pollock it is not so much important for research to be evidence-based as it should be engaged in the politics of the underdog such as "giving priority to what has hitherto been marginal, invisible and unheard" (Pollock 1993:114). This view, which suggests that knowledge is ineluctably political, and therefore necessarily biased, as a result of which morality demands that it should be employed to favour the weak, explains the motivation behind some of his other works such as 'political philology' as well as points to the fundamental weakness in his overall scholarship.

First of all, there is the contrary opinion that knowledge is not necessarily political – passionately articulated by Marchand (2009: xxvi) as stated above. Secondly, and more importantly, in the specific context of *Wissenschaft*, Pollock's remonstrations against objective scholarship make no sense at all. Romanticism, which arose out of a sense of alienation and loss, prioritized emotion or will over reason, which was advocated by the Enlightenment. Objective scholarship essentially means that reason should be independent of will. If reason became subservient to will under the Nazi regime, as is evident from its promotion of "pseudo"-science aimed towards the achievement of preconceived results, it was not because reason was not aware of the power of will, as Pollock suggests, but because it was self-consciously brought into subservience of the will by the Nazi regime. Hitler belaboured that the German antipathy towards the Jews was emotional and needed to be understood scientifically. Accordingly, he advocated a "scientific antisemitism" or an "antisemitism of reason" (Steinweis 2006:7). To put simply, Hitler's point was that "will" remains ineffective unless reason serves as its instrument. It is interesting to note that Pollock is making the same point albeit on the ground that knowledge is ineluctably political i.e. to say, reason is necessarily subservient to will and so should not pretend to take an independent stand. Furthermore, Hitler too would claim that he was advocating a "morally-sensitive scholarship" since, from his perspective, he was only trying to save Germany from being destroyed from within by the "Jewish bacillus" (Fitzpatrick, 2008:477).

In conclusion, the superficial manner in which Pollock has dealt with the subject of German Indology and the Nazi regime – raising the issue of an allegedly objective scholarship and lengthy pronouncements by some Indologists sympathetic to the Nazi cause – suggests to me that he is not genuinely interested in understanding this complex and tragic chapter in German history whose many dimensions I have sought to outline above. Instead, it appears that the objective is to use German Orientalism as a bridge between British and Sanskrit Orientalism whose affinities are otherwise not at all sensible given that the former was engaged in the study of colonized people for the purpose of colonial rule, while the latter was nothing of the kind. The aim of projecting German Orientalism as knowledge sponsored by a state for the domination, oppression and extermination of its own citizens, facilitates the conception of Sanskrit knowledge along similar lines and thus makes it amenable to a theorization as an epistemological tool meant for political ends.

Sanskrit Orientalism

In order to theorize Sanskrit knowledge as a form of "pre-Orientalist Orientalism" collaborating with a "pre-colonial colonialism," Pollock (1993:96 ff.) disputes the post-colonialist view that Brahmanical texts were elevated to a legal authority under colonial rule and their formulations thus acquired an unprecedented hegemonic form. His contention is that such a transformation had already occurred in the production of the commentaries and digests on the *dharma-śāstra-s* – the *dharma-nibandha* genre – during the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE. He specifically points out the Hindu rulers of this period who sponsored these works and refers to their authors as Indian "Orientalists" (Pollock 1993:98). He attempts to rationalize this cultural production by suggesting that it occurred as a "special reaffirmation of *dharma*" in response to the Turkish invasion. He outlines the various restrictions imposed on the *śūdra-s* in the *dharma-śāstra-s*, including denial of Vedic knowledge, as an instrumental use of knowledge for the purpose of domination.

The fact that the *dharma-śāstra-s* conceive of people belonging to different *varṇa-s* as consisting of different essential natures and assigns them, accordingly, different sets of privileges and obligations is common knowledge. But to reduce this schema to a mere form of domination without supplying the necessary context – as Pollock attempts to do – becomes just as problematic as in the case of German Orientalism, explained in the previous section. As far as the knowledge aspect is concerned, one is required to study the *dharma-śāstra-s* holistically, as say Kane or Lingat has done, and if the dimension of power is of interest, then it would be necessary to consider its competition with other sources of power, mainly derived from custom, in its attempt to transform itself into law – the instrument of legitimate coercion in society. However, just as in case of his study of German Orientalism, Pollock has done neither of the two. On the one hand, he remains fixated on the apparent iniquities of *śūdra-dharma*, while on the other, he considers random statements of *varṇa* hierarchy as "dreams of power" with effective bearing on reality by the mere virtue of their having been dreamt (Pollock 1993:102-3).

It was the British judges – in 19th century India - who faced the full brunt of the problem when they allocated a juridical character to the *dharma-śāstra-s*. Undoubtedly the pronouncements of the *dharma-śāstra-s* were meant for gain of spiritual merit but to what extent did they acquire the force of law such that they could assume a form of domination in pre-colonial history? It would appear that even pronouncements that were juridical in character i.e. pertaining to *vyavahāra*, carried a dharmic rather than a legal force. Having assessed the debates on the issue between the colonial judges, Lingat (1973) concludes:

> The written law of the śāstras and the customary laws of the different groups of humanity thus existed side by side, equally respected though often in notable disagreement with each other. The former acted upon the latter and restricted its mobility; but the latter also acted upon the former through the medium of interpretation. The result was an extremely variable and diverse law (Lingat 1973:141-2).

The pre-colonial Indian judge, then, played the role of an arbitrator "who had the power to apply as the case demanded the law of the holy *ṛṣi-s* or the custom of ancestors" (ibid). Given its coercive nature, if law is one of the best indexes of the structure of power in society then we can see that it was a contested issue between the *dharma-śāstra-s* and the customs of various local groups.

As mentioned above, in order to offer a precedent for the changes which occurred in Hindu Law in the colonial period, Pollock refers to the composition of the *dharma-nibandha*-s as a sort of "pre-Oriental Orientalism" in the face of the Turkish invasion. However, systematization of the *dharma-śāstra* texts in the form of commentaries and digests began in the ninth century with the famous gloss of Medhātithi on the *Manusmṛti* and not in response to any foreign invasion[10]. According to Lingat (1973:143-4) it was probably an attempt at rediscovery after a hiatus had passed since the composition of the last *dharma-śāstra*-s.

In any case, these two events – the production of the *dharma-nibandha*-s and the production of Indological works in the colonial period – in different times and under radically different circumstances, and in fact authored by different people – the Indians in the first case and the Europeans in the latter – can hardly be comparable. True, both involved scriptural study and validation, and both were sponsored by powers ruling in India, but that is only a superficial comparison. In the nineteenth century, we know that Eurocentric and Christocentric frameworks were used in the study of Indian scriptures for the purpose of colonization and proselytization. Further, the interpretations were explicitly intended to be of juridical value to enable the colonial government to rule its Hindu subjects. On the other hand, *dharma-nibandha* interpretation was of an exegetical nature, using the principles of Mīmāṁsā whose purpose was clearly to elucidate *dharma* rather than law.

When it comes to Sanskrit knowledge, Pollock repeatedly uses the term "pre-colonial forms of domination" for the real nature of social power in ancient India is not known with certainty. In fact, a "detailed topography of pre-colonial domination" (1993:104) is a desideratum in his view but yet he declares in advance that it would consist of "not just the instrumental use of Knowledge (indeed, of *veda)* in the essentialization and dichotomization of the social order, but the very control of knowledge" *(ibid).* On the other hand, he complains that the post-colonialists, without having interrogated the forms of pre-colonial domination, accuse the British of having arbitrarily privileged the *dharma-śāstra*-s over local custom. Thus, he refers to the essay

Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India by Lata Mani in which she contends that as an effect of the colonial discourse, Brahmanical scripture came to be privileged and constituted as the authentic cultural tradition of India. His argument is that in order to prove this point, the author does not "proceed to the logically prior question, 'whether brahmanic texts [have] always been prioritized as the source of law' . . . but to 'a careful reading of the Parliamentary Papers' . . . [and thus] we never leave the colonial arena in pursuit of these goals" (1993:99).

However, he does not consider the fact that the reason why Mani does not find it necessary to leave the "colonial arena" is that the evidence she is looking for is covered in the texts of the colonial period where she discerns a change in the depositions made by the pundits:

> While officials treated *vyavasthās* (the written responses of pundits to questions put to them by colonial officials on various aspects of sati) as truthful exegeses of the scriptures in an absolute sense, it is clear from reading the *vyavasthās* that the pundits issuing them believed them to be interpretive (Mani 1987:133).

As Mani explains, the Parliamentary Papers show that the *vyavasthās* were tentative which would imply that the pundits issuing them were being called upon to interpret scripture in altogether different ways and for unprecedented purposes:

> In the beginning at least, the responses of pundits appointed to the court did not reflect the kind of authority that colonial officials had assumed, both for the texts and the pundits (*ibid*, 149).
>
> By contrast there is nothing tentative about the 1830 orthodox petition; there are no qualifiers prefacing textual excerpts . . . [and the petition was noted as being] 'accompanied by legal documents.' Here the equation between law and scripture is complete (150).

What Mani's research of the Parliamentary Papers reveals is how Indians adapted themselves as they began to understand what could and could not pass muster in the new regime as legally admissible and gradually started prioritizing scripture in their legal petitions as they realized it would prove most effective with their colonial masters. It is evident from Mani's essay that apart from Brahmanical scripture, there were other sources of law such as caste councils and customary usages, which were ignored by the colonial administrators.

While Lingat (1973:139 ff.) explains how the British judges such as H. Nelson, District Judge in the Madras Presidency, and Indologists such as Auguste Barth sought to rectify the undue weightage they had ascribed to the *dharma-śāstra*-s in legal matters due to European presumptions about the operation of law, Pollock chooses to repeat the errors of the early Orientalists. He treats the restrictions on the *śūdra*-s in the *dharma-śāstra*-s as "juridical structures of inequality" (Pollock 1993:111) and speculates that "in fact, much of the discourse as we find it in the nineteenth-century Raj could easily have derived, and may have actually derived, from a text like the twelfth-century digest" (Pollock 1993:100).

American Orientalism

The purpose of Pollock's essay is to highlight the challenges faced by an Indology confronted with the realization of its Orientalist essence and its future in a world which remains suspicious of objectivity and where critical knowledge remains subservient in unknowable ways to imperialist ambition. In the final section of his essay, titled 'For a Critical Indology,' Pollock explains four limitations of Indological scholarship which have become exposed in recent times and the way forward for this discipline. This discussion merits our attention because it bears repercussions for the manner in which Indological scholars will be ideally expected to approach their objects of study.

Firstly, Indology was complicit in colonialism and Nazism but even as these forms of domination have faded away, "the rise of a new empire and its continued production and utilization of Orientalist knowledge" suggests that "neo-colonial foundations have been built in their place" (Pollock 1993:111). Without naming it, Pollock appears to be hinting at the rise of an American Orientalism.

Secondly, Pollock relates Indology to a more general "crisis of the culture of humanistic scholarship as such" (ibid). He refers to scholars in humanistic studies who collaborated directly or indirectly with repressive powers and questions the value of their scholarship to human life. Interestingly, the scholars he mentions in this context include only those who later came to be associated with fascism such as Heidegger, Paul de Man, Eliade and Dumezil. He is careful not to draw suspicion towards Western scholarship in the humanities, which was supportive of leftist repressive powers.

Thirdly, while humanistic scholarship in the West remains critical of the dominant regime, it is at the same time sponsored by the regime itself through its institutions. This point raised by Pollock is important because it unwittingly reveals the warped mentality which critical scholarship has assumed in our times. It is but obvious that any liberal regime will allocate space for an oppositional discourse and encourage a diverse set of ideas which will serve as a check on excess. But it is only those who enter that space not so much to offer correctives to the policies of the dominant regime but to overthrow the system in its totality, who ponder in amazement at the sponsorship they receive from it and disparage it as "domestication" and "commodification" of their knowledge.

Finally, Pollock once again alludes to the problem of objectivity in scholarship which is readily admitted in theory but is not corrected in practice. This neatly sums up the crisis faced by the humanities in the West and it is important for Indians to pay attention to it because Indology, as a Western discipline, as the application of Western theories for studying Indian texts and traditions, is equally affected by it.

Let us now consider the tentative solutions which Pollock has proposed to overcome the foregoing problems. Firstly, with regards to the issue of objectivity, he suggests that "we should construct perspectives that ... would include giving priority to what has hitherto been marginal, invisible and unheard" (114). While Pollock admits the difficulties of excavating this knowledge "given the radical silencing and screening out of communities effected by 'classical' culture" (*ibid*), what is unclear is the relation of this strategy to the problem of objectivity which as he puts it has to do with "the pre-judgments, theory-ladenness, and perspectival partiality out of and with which we perceive ... a cultural object; the way discourses serve in class-divided societies to sustain forms of domination; the purely rhetorical (rather than ontological) status of the truth claims of historical description" (Pollock 1993:113).

The implicit suggestion here is that since scholarship cannot be objective anyway it is best to justify it as the unworthy means to the noble end of giving voice to the "marginal, invisible and unheard."

What is disquieting is that since these voices have admittedly been "radically silenced and screened out" by the "classical" culture, their recovery will likely involve nothing more than a denigration and denunciation of the "classical" culture itself and a superimposition by contemporary thinkers of their own radical views on their objects of study. We must bear in mind that according to the standard Orientalist critique, such a dominant Sanskritic "classical" culture is itself the construct *par excellence* of colonial Indology. Pollock, on the other hand, appears to be suggesting that colonial Indology privileged a Sanskritic "classical" culture that had always been dominant and what future Indology should do is privilege those cultural voices which were allegedly dominated by it. Hence his desperate attempts to "save" colonial Indology from the stigma of Orientalism i.e. from the allegation of having constructed an imagined India using a Western lens. What he is effectively saying is that colonial Indology did not err in terms of the form of the dominant Sanskritic "classical" culture which it conceived; it erred rather in perpetuating that dominance when it should have deprecated it and this is the error which future Indology should strive to rectify.

Secondly, he points out that prior to the eighteenth century, the world system was dominated by India while Europe enjoyed a peripheral position. However, the socio-economic historiography of India was geared towards explaining the causes of under-development rather than the actual developments which had occurred. In a similar manner, he suggests that "a pre-emptive European conceptual framework of analysis has disabled us from probing central features of South Asian life, from pre-western forms of 'national' (or feminist, or communalist, or ethnic) identity or consciousness, pre-modern forms of cultural 'modernism,' pre-colonial forms of colonialism" (Pollock 1993:115).

What is assumed here is that if India was a developed economy prior to the colonial conquest then it must have analogous formulations of modernity and the purpose of Indology is to discover the Indian equivalents for those categories which qualify as modernistic in the West. This is a problematic quest because it does not seek to understand India in terms of its own intellectual categories but presumes that similar historical processes were taking place in India as in the West but got arrested due to the colonial intervention. Instead of imposing the Western forms, it seeks to activate the allegedly native forms of these historical processes. These correspondences sound eerily familiar to the manner in which developments within a Western category like 'religion' are mapped to Indian phenomena such that the flow "Old Testament – New Testament – Catholicism – Protestantism" becomes comparable to "Veda – Upaniṣads – Brahmanism or Dharmic Hinduism – Buddhism and other protest movements."

Thirdly, Pollock warns sternly against "third-worldism" i.e. the projection of an unproblematized concept of tradition. He points out that "traditions . . . have been empires of oppression in their own right – against women, above all, but also against other domestic communities" (Pollock 1993:116). In the Indian case, he considers Sanskrit as the main agent of oppression. He understands the difficulties faced by the Western scholars in thematizing violence in traditions which have suffered at the hands of the West, but appears to condone the intervention in cases of "a culture's failure to play by its own rules" and "evidence of internal opposition to its domination" (*ibid*). Both these are problematic clauses as a loop-hole can easily be found to justify intervention through the production of "atrocity literature." There is also the audacity of interventionism to consider here as if there is a mandate for Western scholars to meddle in the internal issues of "third-world" cultures. It is not clear if such a mandate is entrusted to Western intelligentsia in general with regards to all cultures, or if this is a prerogative merely of Western Indologists with regards to Sanskrit culture. What is, however, most alarming in this point is the advocacy of a *prima facie* approach towards "tradition" as an "empire of oppression" rather than seeking to understand how it facilitates the maintenance of a decent society. On the other hand, we have seen in the previous point how the Indologist is exhorted by Pollock to highlight the modernistic impulses in Indian history, notwithstanding the fact that the most widespread and horrific instances of oppression in the last three centuries are to be found in modernity.

Finally, Pollock is critical of attempts at historicizing the "traditional domination as coded in Sanskrit" (*ibid*). He quotes the view of a random woman who claims to submit to "the economic, social and emotional violence of Indian widowhood" on account of the *śāstra*-s and a Dalit manifesto which declares the "first and foremost object of this cultural revolution" to be the liberation of every person from the "thraldom of the *śāstra-s*" (*ibid*). Clearly, in his view the *śāstra*-s are highly oppressive in nature and their ill-effects are experienced to this day. He demonstrates no interest in verifying the allegations laid against the *śāstra*-s or what improvements can be done to check their excesses. If we refer to his views articulated elsewhere in the essay that "none of this palliation [of counter-movements like Buddhism or sectarian movements like Pañcarātra] makes itself felt in the totalizing constructions of the social order" (Pollock 1993:110), it is evident that he considers the situation hopeless. His intention appears to be nothing short of branding the *śāstra-s* as an incurable evil and thus exhorts that "we should not resist any 'historicization' that serves to normalize or trivialize domination" (Pollock 1993:116).

I assume that Pollock wants to say that we *should* resist 'historicization' and the negation is a typo because he gives here the example of *Historikerstreit* in which a critique was developed against the demand for a historicization of the Nazi period. As we have noted above, in the previous two sections, understanding German Indology in the context of historical antisemitism, Nazi Germany in the context of German colonialism, and Sanskrit knowledge in the context of tension between *dharma* and law, permits us to come to grips with the tragedy which overcame the Jewish people and the traditional Hindu legal system. On the other hand, to quarantine these historical moments, whether Nazi Germany or the Sanskrit culture, as if they were manifestations of some kind of an ahistorical, demonic evil, would reduce them simply to monuments of undying national shame, which has happened in the case of the former and which, it appears, Pollock would like to make happen in the case of the latter. What is ironical is that by drawing a comparison between Nazi Germany and Sanskrit culture, he accomplishes the very travesty he seeks to avoid – of normalizing and trivialising the crimes of Nazism. After all, at the core of *Historikerstreit* lay precisely "the question of moral equivalence – the notion that by comparing atrocities and genocides, the Holocaust is diminished through its linkage with other 'lesser' events" (Fitzpatrick, 2008:483).

Furthermore, it is hypocritical that Pollock does not find it problematic to historicize British colonialism by tracing its form of domination to a "pre-colonial colonialism." In this matter, he willingly "jeopardizes the heuristic historical specificity of the very concept [of Orientalism]" on the pretext that "we may lose something still greater if not doing so constrains our understanding of the two other historical phenomenon [i.e. German Indology and Sanskrit knowledge]" (Pollock 1993:78).Yet elsewhere, in the process of criticizing the pursuit of objectivity in scholarship, he deplores "the decontextualization and dehistoricization of the scholarly act" pointing out that it "enabled some of the most politically deformed scholarship in history . . . to come into existence" (Pollock 1993:86-87).It thus appears that determining which historical events, concepts and texts should or should not be historicized, contextualized or, for that matter, "nuanced," constitutes the very essence of the politics of knowledge production.

Conclusion

The declared intent of Pollock's essay is to extend the framework of Orientalism to include German Indology and Sanskrit knowledge and thus to depict them as forms of domination. However, the net result of this effort is to exonerate British Orientalism from misinterpreting and misrepresenting Sanskrit knowledge for the advancement of colonial rule, and project Sanskrit knowledge itself as a factor in the development of Nazi ideology. It is impressed upon the reader through reiteration that Sanskrit knowledge was a tool for expressing power in ancient India:

> Sanskrit knowledge presents itself to us as a major vehicle of the ideological form of social power in traditional India (Pollock 1993:77).
>
> Sanskrit was the principal discursive instrument of domination in pre-modern India (Pollock 1993:116).
>
> [An] analysis of the object of Indology [i.e. Sanskrit knowledges] . . . as an indigenous form of knowledge production *equally saturated with domination* [as Indology itself, has] important implications
>
> (Pollock 1993:80, italics mine).

However, if Sanskrit knowledge was always imbricated in power, then its projection as a form of domination in Indology cannot be treated as a distortion, which means that Indology itself cannot be considered as Orientalist in the polemical sense. Rather, it suggests that if Indological knowledge abetted in colonial domination it was because its object of study naturally lent itself to such an application for even prior to the British conquest, it was a form of exercising hegemony. Pollock admit this much as well:

> Sanskrit and Indian studies have contributed directly to consolidating and sustaining programs of domination. In this (noteworthy orthogenesis) *these studies have recapitulated the character of their subject*, that indigenous discourse of power for which Sanskrit has been one major vehicle and which has shown a notable longevity and resilience
>
> (Pollock 1993: 111, italics mine).

If the British Indologists were simply 'recapitulating the character of their subject' in their collaboration with colonialism, then it can well be said that the German Indologists were doing the same in their collaboration with Nazism. Pollock forges a connection between Sanskrit knowledge and Nazi ideology through such subliminal devices as referring, on the one hand, to the anti-Jewish laws in Nazi Germany as *śāstric* codifications (Pollock 1993:86) and advising, on the other hand, the intellectual-historical study of the Sanskrit *arya* in a manner analogous to the German *Arier* (Pollock 1993:107). He treats the restrictions on the *śūdra*-s found in dharmic texts as "components of a program of domination whose true spirit we might begin to conjure with other comparable programs, such as the *Arierparagraphen* of the NS state" (Pollock 1993:111). His expostulation against the historicization of Sanskrit knowledge is also expressed through a reference to the *Historikerstreit* debate suggesting that its form of domination be considered analogous to the Nazi regime. Sanskrit knowledges thus serve not only as a vehicle of oppression in their own right, but through British and German Indology become causal factors in colonialism and Nazism as well. All these memes of oppression, historically associated with Western powers – British and Nazi – thus converge upon Sanskrit knowledge through Pollock's slanderous project of the comparative morphology of domination.

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Endnotes

[1] The question mark in the title of Pollock's essay is pertinent and reflects its typically amorphous and suggestive style. Ideas are often expressed in the form of possibilities which would need to be substantiated by future research or are presumed to have been established by other scholars without specifying their argument. Grünendahl (2012) who refers to these discourse strategies as "desideratum scheme" and "feigned factuality" (Grünendahl 2012:201), also notes derisively "the increasing tendency" in Pollock's acolytes "to drop (metaphorically) the invertebrate question mark, as if Pollock's amorphous presumptions had meanwhile coagulated into hard facts" (Grünendahl 2012:187).

[2] Consider, for example, the section "Blaming Sanskrit for Nazism" in Malhotra (2016). Also, the editors of Orientalism and Postcolonial Predicament admit: "Sheldon Pollock [shows] that there are important family resemblances between precolonial Brahmanical discourse and Orientalist scholarship. Pollock argues that the German Orientalists took a feature of Brahmanical discourse, namely its distinction between Aryans and non-Aryans, as 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' respectively, and applied this distinction to their own society in their attempt to define the Jews as non-Aryan" (Breckenridge and Veer, 1993).

[3] Phillip (2014) declares: "It must be said at the outset that few specialists in Middle Eastern or Asian studies have been persuaded by Said's appraisal of scholarly endeavours by academic Orientalists. Indeed, his book has been found to be riddled with errors, flagrant omissions, and drastic overgeneralizations." See Phillip (2014:208-09) for a bibliography of general critiques of Said's Orientalism. An excellent resource on the topic is the chapter Said's Orientalism: a book and its aftermath in Lockman (2004) which gives a summary of the book and the controversial exchanges which followed its publication.

[4] Anglo-French Orientalism also provides a neat segue to American Orientalism, which is the main adversary of the Arab world today. Said was an activist for the Palestinian cause and *Orientalism* belonged to a phase when "deepening political engagement in the 1970s led him to criticize the ways in which Arabs and Muslims were often depicted in the Western media" (Lockman, 2004:183). His other books in the same period addressed "the traumatic dispossession, subordination and ongoing suppression which the Palestinians had experienced at the hands of Zionism and Israel" and "what Said saw as distorted and pernicious US media coverage of the Iranian revolution of 1978–79 and its aftermath, and of the threat which Islam allegedly posed to the United States" (*ibid*). It thus appears to me that the real target of *Orientalism* was actually American Orientalism, and Anglo-French Orientalism provided merely the foundation for the polemic. "From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II France and Britain dominated the Orient and Orientalism; since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Britain once did" (Said, 1978:4).

[5] Pollock (1993:118) claims in a footnote that Said has acknowledged the omission of German Orientalism in his essay *Orientalism Reconsidered* (1985). This is false. Quite to the contrary, he specifically informs his critics that "[problems] like my exclusion of German Orientalism, which no one has given any reason for me to have included – have frankly struck me as superficial or trivial, and there seems no point in even responding to them" (Said 1985:90).

[6] "Annihilation was arrived upon only after the failure of other methods, such as boycott, emigration, legislation and Aryanisation. Proponents of the Functionalist view argue, for example, that the Nazis were content to be rid of the Jews through emigration until as late as 1941. The refusal of most of the rest of the countries of the world to take in the Jews gave Hitler the green light" (Hellig 2003:44).

[7] As Hellig (2003:258) puts it so eloquently: "For Jews to obtain the 'ticket of entrance' to gentile society, as the young Heinrich Heine put it, they had to be made 'better' in some way."

[8] The term "abject" in apposition to "subject" and "object" is borrowed from Kristeva. For its application to the Jews in modern Germany, see Fitzpatrick (2008:477).

[9] "The Sonderweg thesis, as the name suggests, emphasized that nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Germany suffered the stain of a uniqueness stemming from a maimed path to modernity, a path via which Germany became not another England, the putatively normative successful nation, but a "conservative utopia" in which liberalism was only weakly anchored. Ineluctably, this narrative suggested, by reaching its historic turning point and "failing to turn," Germany missed the path to modernity and was only shocked into becoming a "normal" liberal state by undergoing the purgative rigours of National Socialism." (Fitzpatrick 2008:481). The thesis has been disputed in *The Peculiarities of German History* by Blackbourn and Eley (*ibid*).

[10] The commentaries (*bhāṣya*) and digests (*nibandha*) can be understood as narratives in the same genre. Pollock himself makes no attempt to distinguish between the two. The differencem is only that the digests arranged their material topically while the commentaries based themselves on a particular *dharmaśāstra* but they too included materials from other *dharmaśāstras* and sought to reconcile between them as they approached these master texts as a single corpus (see Lingat 1973, 107 ff).

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Chapter 3

Sheldon Pollock's Idea of a "National-Socialist Indology"

– *Koenraad Elst*

Abstract

Sheldon Pollock is by no means the first one to build on the mythology that has overgrown the factual core of a link between racism in general, National-Socialism in particular, and the study of Indo-European and Sanskrit. In his case, the alleged National-Socialist connection of Sanskrit is heavily over-interpreted and emphatically taken to be causal, as if the interest in Sanskrit has caused the Holocaust. We verify the claims on which he erects this thesis one by one, and find them surprisingly weak or simply wrong. They could only have been made in a climate in which a vague assumption of these links (starting with the swastika, which in reality was not taken from Hinduism) was already common. Yet, even non-specialists could easily have checked that Adolf Hitler expressed his contempt for Hinduism, repeatedly and in writing.

Pollock's attempt to even link the Out-of-India Theory with the Nazi worldview is the diametrical opposite of the truth; it was the rivalling Aryan Invasion Theory (which Pollock himself upholds) that formed the cornerstone and perfect illustration of the Nazi worldview. This linking could only pass peer review because of the general animus against Hinduism and Indo-European indigenism in American

academe. The whole forced attempt to associate Hinduism with National-Socialism suggests a rare animosity against Hinduism.

Sheldon Pollock's Idea of a "National-Socialist Indology"

Sheldon Pollock, professor of Sanskrit at Columbia University, links Sanskrit with the Holocaust, no less. Or at least, his critics (Malhotra 2016, Paranjape 2016) cite him to that effect. But according to Tony Joseph (2016), one of Pollock's declared defenders, "the anti-Pollock campaign is based on quotes stripped out of their context". Be that as it may in general, in the present paper we will take care to put Pollock's utterances on the links between the Sanskrit tradition and National-Socialism (NS, Nazism) in context. As it happens, in this case, there is simply no context that could possibly render Pollock's position harmless, for it is the single worst allegation possible in contemporary Western culture, viz. responsibility for the Nazi Holocaust. Nevertheless, we will give due attention to this context.

A somewhat frivolous element from the immediate context was that NS Germany was hosting Indian freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose. ("Jana Gana Mana, independent India's national anthem, was first performed in an imposing celebration at the inauguration of the Deutsch-Indische Gesellschaft in Hamburg on 11 September 1942, for Bose had chosen it as free India's national anthem". (Hartog 2001:iv)) But that context can perhaps best be left undiscussed, for the regiment that Bose had formed, was anything but Hindu traditionalist. Far from inspiring caste hierarchy into their NS hosts, Bose's soldiers were not organized by caste, unlike those in the British-Indian army. Bose was a socialist, a progressive, on the same anti-caste wavelength as Pollock; but the Nazis never held that against him. So let us see what Pollock himself chooses to focus on.

The centuries before National-Socialism

In his overview of pre-Nazi German Indology, Pollock only follows the received wisdom when he stereotypes 19th-century German scholarship. He credits the German Orientalists with the creation of *Wissenschaft*, the scholarly canons that became normative in academe worldwide, with an ideal of objectivity (as in the definition of historiography by Leopold von Ranke, mentioned by Pollock (1993:84): reconstructing events "as they have been in reality"); but also with a frantic search for a German national identity. In that project, they used the Sanskrit tradition, viz. as partially preserving the "Aryan" identity that, through Indo-European (Indogermanisch or Arisch) linguistic unity, could inspire any German cultural self-identification.

Like so many contemporary scholars of the field, including Hindus and Muslims, he assumes the conceptual framework of Edward Said's thesis *Orientalism* (1978). There, Said analyses the academic discipline of Orientalism (formally: "Oriental Philology and History", as still on this writer's diploma) as but an instrument for control, a method used by the colonial powers to dominate the natives of the Orient. This claim has been lambasted as riddled with factual errors and as conceptually a conspiracy theory by Irwin (2006), Warraq (2007) and Elst (2012), but has taken academe by storm and is now cited as gospel.

Pollock (1993:114) gives a nod to the existence of a "pre-orientalist orientalism", a scholarship originating in the Catholic Church's late-medieval attempts to reconnect with the Oriental Churches and to study its Islamic rival, when Europe had no colonies yet. Yet he formulates his own career project in Saidian terms: "Moving beyond orientalism finally presupposes moving beyond the culture of domination and the politics of coercion that have nurtured orientalism in all its varieties, and been nurtured by it in turn." (Pollock 1993:117)

The expression "orientalism in all its varieties" refers, among other things, to the special nature of Orientalism in its mainstay, German-speaking Central Europe. Unlike France and England, Germany had initially no colonies, and later only some colonies far from the Orient. This fact should refute Said's whole thesis, but he neutralizes it by keeping German Orientalism outside the purview of his book. (Later, this gap was filled by Marchand 2009 and, for Indology, by Adluri & Bagchee 2014) According to Pollock (1993:83), Germany practised its own Orientalism in an attempt to solve its "problem of identity", and more consequentially, "to colonize Europe, and Germany itself, from within", in a "German allomorph of British imperialism". And here we see, with a big stretch, the connection between the proverbial German scholarship of the 19th century and the Nazi project of empire. Just as British Orientalism was evil by being a concoction in the service of empire-building, German Orientalism was evil by its connection with hyper-nationalism and genocide. That, at least, is Pollock's message.

Nazi investment in Indology

Modern scholars devote a lot of time to studying every possible dimension of the NS polity and ideology, including the work of anyone thought to have NS ties, such as the philosopher and NS party member Martin Heidegger: 'Like the predicament of Indology, that of humanistic studies in general has belatedly seized the attention of scholars, as *Der Fall Heidegger* ["the case of Heidegger"] demonstrates.' (Pollock 1993:112)

And so, Pollock includes his own specialism, Indology, among the culprits. The indictment:

> "In German Indology of the NS era, a largely nonscholarly mystical nativism deriving ultimately from a mixture of romanticism and protonationalism merged with that objectivism of Wissenschaft earlier described, and together they fostered the ultimate 'orientalist' project, the legitimation of genocide." (Pollock 1993:96)

The allegation is extremely serious. Yet, he never quotes any of those Indologists as actually declaring they want genocide; or that the aim of their professional choice is genocide. Since, moreover, genocide is somehow declared to be the ultimate finality of Orientalism, this seems also to indict the French and British Orientalists. Alright, he fails to prove that rather unlikely point; but what does he prove?

He claims a "substantial increase in the investment on the part of the NS state in Indology and 'Indo-Germanistik.' Both [Heinrich] Himmler and [Alfred] Rosenberg sponsored institutes centrally concerned with 'Indo-Germanische Geistesgeschichte'." (Pollock 1993:95) Note the sly cursory shift from Indology to "Indo-Germanistik": the former deals with India and, as we shall see, received no increased interest from the NS regime at all; while the latter deals with Europe and especially Germany, the putative racial heir of the Indo-Europeans, and became the centre of NS attention.

In fact, the proof he himself adduces, proves something else than an increased German interest in Indology. He compares a total of 26 full professors of "Aryan" orientalism in Germany with just 4 in England, the colonial metropole – but for the year 1903 (detailed in Rhys-Davids 1904). This had nothing to do with a NS penchant for India, for this special German interest in the Orient existed since long before (and incidentally, makes mincemeat of Said's linking Orientalism with the colonial entreprise).

In support, Pollock refers to a primary source, the *Minerva Jahrbücher*, an annuary with academic data. But after thoroughly checking these, the contemporary German Indologist from Göttingen, Reinhold Grünendahl (2012:95), shows these data to confirm an uneventful continuity with pre-NS days:

> "As was the case with the 1933/34 volume and Rhys Davids's paper of 1904, none serve to corroborate Pollock's presumptions. The same holds for recent evidence-based studies that in any way pertain to such issues [. . .], all of which confirm that Pollock's deep ruminations on 'the political economy of Indology in Germany in the period 1800–1945' (1993: 118n5) are entirely unfounded. Nevertheless, his attendant admonition that this is an 'important question' awaiting 'serious analysis' (118n5) has become a kind of gospel, recited by others [. . .] with increasing confidence, but with very little to show as yet in terms of substantiation. Yet, all this while, dozens of 'histories of German Indology' are built on the—still unfulfilled—promises of that gospel."

In his researches, Grünendahl (2012:194) has checked Rhys-Davids' writings and discovered a telling example of how the racialist "NS" worldview was already present in Britain earlier:

> "However, a more important factor seems to me to be Rhys Davids's racialist—or more precisely Aryanist—bias, documented, for example, in statements to the effect that Gautama Buddha 'was the only man of our own race, the only Aryan, who can rank as the founder of a great religion' and that therefore 'the whole intellectual and religious development of which Buddhism is the final outcome was distinctively Aryan, and Buddhism is the one essentially Aryan faith' (1896:185), which 'took its rise among an advancing and conquering people full of pride in their colour and their race. . . ' (1896:187)."

But Pollock (1993:94) has a point when he notes that a number of Indologists were NS party members or SS officials, e.g. Walther Wüst, Erich Frauwallner, Jakob Hauer, Richard Schmidt. He estimates these as one-third of the Indology professors. He admits that there was a silent opposition too, e.g. when Wüst became board member of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* ("German Oriental Society"), "the aged Geiger [= Wilhelm Geiger, Wüst's mentor] objected privately to the behavior of Wüst." (Pollock 1993:123) And that may have been the tip of an iceberg, though we will not hazard a guess on the proportion of open resisters, silent resisters, fence-sitters and collaborators.

Functionalism

Pollock gives the impression of a rather shaky grasp on NS history. It is, after all, not his field. Rather than properly delving into it in preparation of this ambitious paper, he seems to have gone by the received wisdom prevalent in his own liberal circles. The charitable explanation is that, not being a historian of WW2, he simply overstepped the boundaries of his competence. The alternative is that he deliberately forged this claim about Indology and National-Socialism as a weapon, in this case against the Sanskrit tradition. Some popular writers (e.g. Pennick 1981) have indeed done something similar, often after classifying Hindu ideas like reincarnation in the "occult" category. They have correctly sensed the windfall of benefits, whether political or commercial, guaranteed to whomever manages to instrumentalize references to National-Socialism.

He claims that "the extermination of the Jews would seem to pose a serious challenge to any purely functionalist explanation of National Socialism." (Pollock 1993:88) Perhaps there was still some room for doubt in 1993, and though marginal, the hypothesis of "intentionalism", viz. that the genocide of the Jews was planned since the beginning of the Nazi movement, was still in existence in erudite company. This hypothesis would imply, in a maximalist interpretation (viz. that any supporter of National-Socialism wilfully supported all of its programme), that NS Indologists like Fauwallner or Hauer supported "genocide".

Strictly speaking, Hindus have no reason to defend these Indologists, for none of them was Hindu, and they projected a non-Hindu NS framework onto Hindu texts. Given the complexity of the reasons for a man's inclinations, their interest in the Sanskrit traditions implies nothing at all about the Sanskrit tradition itself. Nevertheless, it is worth observing that even if these scholars were party members, this does not mean they supported genocide, for that item was not on the party programme. Anti-Semitism is bad (and of that, they can certainly be held guilty) but genocide is something else again. Even when it was later decided upon, it was still carried out in secrecy because the top Nazis knew that it would offend the German population including many party members.

Today, no historian worth his salt takes this intentionalism serious anymore, though it lives on in Hollywood stereotyping. Apart from being unsupported by facts, intentionalism also sins against the reigning postmodernist canon by being "essentialist", i.e. positing an irreducible unchanging nature to NS ideology; when even that turns out to be historical and changeble under the impact of circumstances. The "functionalist" hypothesis has won the day, viz. that the idea of genocide only came about in a chain of unforeseen decisions under war circumstances in 1940-41. Even then it was carried out in secrecy: as late as 1943, Jewish Councils in occupied countries co-operated in the deportation of their own community, thinking Auschwitz was merely a labour camp. You could be a NS party member and support the idea of a Jew-free Europe (through emigration, as had happened in the 1930s) yet not support nor even know about genocide. To be sure, ethnic cleansing is reprehensible too, but it is not genocide. Scholars ought to exercise a sense of proportion.

For political campaigners living in the relative comforts of the post-war era, it is easy to laugh at the German commoners' 1945 profession: *Wir haben das nicht gewusst* ("We didn't know about it"); but very often, it was formally the truth. Again, supporting the NS regime was bad enough; but it was something else than support for genocide. Pollock, voracious quoter that he is, can at any rate not cite any NS Indologist as expressing support for genocide.

But suppose, just suppose, that tomorrow, an incriminating statement by one of those Indologists gets discovered. Well, he is a human being, susceptible to all kinds of influences, not just those from his field of specialism. It would then still remain to be proven that the Sanskrit tradition which he studied, had given him this inspiration for genocide. Sanskrit writers can be accused of teaching inequality through caste, and Pollock does indeed do so, but it has not been quoted here (nor, as far as is known, anywhere else) that the Vedas or *Śāstras* preach genocide.

Now, if Vedic literature ever enjoined (not even just recounted, but actually enjoined) genocide, there is no doubt that the Dalit movement, the missionaries, the "secularists", the Khalistanis, the many anti-Hindu India-watchers, and perhaps Pollock himself, would gleefully quote it. Not that they ever quote the instances of genocide in the Bible or in the traditions about Mohammed, but for Hinduism they would not be that polite. Indeed, it would have been logical to quote it very prominently in this very paper, as it would prove its entire point. But it seems not to exist.

Anti-Semitism and the Sanskrit Tradition

While genocide entered the mind of some top Nazis only by 1941, another element always associated with the NS ideology was intrinsic to it since the beginning, and very prominent in its writings since ca. 1920 and in policies since 1933: anti-Semitism. While Pollock takes as a matter of course that to the Nazis, "Aryan" was the opposite of "Semitic", he doesn't furnish any fact or quote at all that would meaningfully link this with the Sanskrit tradition.

He correctly notes that the NS view of the Vedas was through an anti-Semitic lens:

> "The *Ṛg-Veda* as an Aryan text 'free of any taint of Semitic contact'; the 'almost Nordic zeal' that lies in the Buddhist conception of the *marga* [way]; the 'Indo-Germanic religion-force' of yoga; the sense of race and the 'conscious desire for racial protection'; the '*volksnahe* kingship' such is the meaning of the Indo-Aryan past for the National Socialist present, a present that, for Wüst, could not be understood without this past."
>
> (Pollock 1993:89)

Yes, that is how the Nazis saw it because they were racist and anti-Semitic to begin with. But the knowledge of the Sanskrit tradition could add absolutely nothing to that. There was nothing in the Vedas themselves that suggested anti-Semitism, it was entirely in the eye of the beholder. Anti-Semitism existed in Europe ever since the people became convinced, through Christianity, that the Jews had been responsible for Jesus' death. Modern nationalism added an ideal of homogenization, so that Jews were wished away as an obstacle to this ideal. By contrast, Vedic literature doesn't know of Jews at all, and Hindu history has only shown a pluralistic hospitality for the Jewish communities on the Malabar coast, complete with their distinctive traditions.

In fact, that pluralism and respect for different identities could be cited as a redeeming feature of the caste system targeted so systematically by Pollock. Hindu reformers, who deny the intimate link between caste and Hinduism during the past twenty or so centuries, are wrong. But they might start by enumerating some redeeming features, such as the sense of belonging-to (rather than of being-excluded-from), and pluralism. Within the caste framework, nobody's comfort or identity was threatened when a foreign community was added. At any rate, the really existing caste system did not include anti-Semitism.

The only thing Pollock can come up with here, in a footnote, is this: "The ratio *ārya : caṇḍāla* [outcaste, untouchable] :: German : Jew was made already by Nietzsche". (Pollock 1993:119) Friedrich Nietzsche was popular among top Nazis, but they read him selectively, leaving out the positions that would not have endeared him to an NS regime. He disliked German nationalism and especially anti-Semitism as, at least, vulgar.

Nevertheless, it is true that Nietzsche (*Twilight of the Idols: The 'Improvers' of Mankind 3*) speculated on the Jews' origin as emigrated *Caṇḍālas*, Untouchables, based on more speculations by the amateur-Indologist Louis Jacolliot. We have discussed this question in full detail elsewhere (Elst 2008), but briefly, it all hinges on the mistranslation of the word *dauścarmya*, "having a skin defect", from the enumeration of *Caṇḍāla* traits in the classical law code *Manu Smṛti* (10:52, but based on 11:49). This word was understood as "missing a piece of skin", hence "circumcised". In reality, Manu nowhere mentions circumcised ones, whether Jews or Muslims.

Moreover, Nietzsche's account doesn't fit the neat scheme given by Pollock. Nietzsche recognized that in some ways, Jews do not fit the dirty and submissive stereotype of outcastes at all, and have been characterized by Aryan traits ever since their entry into history. They ennobled themselves by becoming warriors and conquering their "promised land". They are stereotypically very money-savvy, like the trader caste, and their obsessive purity rules and book-orientedness remind one of the Brahmin caste. Whereas Untouchables do the dirty work at funerals, Jewish priests or *Kohanim* are expected to stay away from corpses. Jews were demonized by the Nazis, but not as low-castes.

Unlike the stereotype of *Caṇḍālas* (more applicable to the Gypsies, known to descend from Indian low-castes and despised by the Nazis), the Jews were considered as rich, powerful, manipulative and extremely clever. Jews definitely did not relate to Germans the way Hindu low-castes relate to the upper castes. And anyway, the NS policy regarding the Jews was not based on this Nietzsche quote.

The "Aryan" homeland question

The official birth of Indo-European linguistics by William Jones's famous Kolkata speech in 1786 (set on a scientific footing by Franz Bopp in 1816, as recognized by Pollock 1993:84) set in motion the search for the original homeland of this language family. The initial favourite was India, as famously stated by Friedrich von Schlegel (cited by Pollock 1993:85). In the present context, it might be a significant detail that Schlegel "married the daughter of the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn", for which he was reproached as "missing racial instinct". (Poliakov 1971:217) Many other scholars from this period can be cited to the same effect, e.g. in 1810, Jakob-Joseph Görres had Abraham come from Kashmir. (Poliakov 1971:219)

In the next decades, the putative homeland was relocated westwards, but Pollock (1993:77) claims that the Germans "continued, however subliminally, to hold the nineteenth-century conviction that the origin of European civilization was to be found in India (or at least that India constituted a genetically related sibling)".

This insinuates that the Nazis still believed in an Indian homeland whereas the British and their allies had long converted to the idea of a more westerly homeland. This much is true, that the NS state was intensely interested in the question of Indo-European origins: Communist states "employ myths of utopia, while fascist systems employ myths of origins". (Pollock 1993:85) But then, Pollock artfully smuggles in a continuity between the earlier Out-of-India hypothesis and the preferred NS location of the homeland. The NS state's legitimation by "Aryan" origins "had been provided early in nineteenth-century Indian orientalism; a benchmark is

Friedrich von Schlegel's identification (1819) of the 'Arier' as 'our Germanic ancestors, while they were still in Asia' (Sieferle 1987:460). In the later NS search for authenticity, Sanskritists, like other intellectuals 'experts in legitimation', as Gramsci put it, did their part in extrapolating and deepening this discourse." (Pollock 1993:85; Antonio Gramsci was the Italian Communist leader who, ca. 1930, theorized the acquisition of cultural hegemony as a prerequisite for political revolution.)

Note also this adroit suggestion of Indian paternity in this quotation from the NS Indologist Walther Wüst:

> "I know of no more striking example of this hereditary, long-term tradition than the ingenious synopsis contained in the brief words of the Führer and the longer confession of the great aryan personality of antiquity, the Buddha. There is only one explanation for this, and that is the basic explanation for components of the National-Socialist world-view: the circumstance, the basic fact of racial constitution. And thanks to fate, this was preserved through the millennia... [through] the holy concept of ancestral heritage [Ahnenerbe]." (Pollock: 1993:90)

Note that in all Pollock's quotations from NS Indologists, only one Hindu is mentioned by name, repeatedly: the Buddha. He tries to make the *Mīmāṁsā* thinkers with their chiseling of *Śāstra* law into an inspiration to the Nazis (as if they needed *Mīmāṁsā* to conceive of inequality), but never manages to find a Nazi quote about them. None, for example, about the 12th-century *Śāstra* commentator Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara, whom he himself drags in frequently as justifying societal hierarchy. On the other hand he presents the Buddha as an antidote to Vedic inequality, yet that same Buddha turns out to be very popular among the Nazis.

There was no NS belief in an Indian homeland at all, on the contrary. To be sure, there was a belief in a racial kinship with the ancient "Aryans" in India, freshly invaded from their more westerly homeland. Of Nordic origin, these Aryans brought their talents into India and gave expression to them in ancient writings, and these naturally showed a kinship with Greek thought and other "Aryan" achievements in Europe.

Thus, NS Indologist Erich Frauwallner says, in Pollock's account (Pollock 1993:93):

> "Frauwallner argued that the special meaning of Indian philosophy lay in its being 'a typical creation of an aryan people', that its similarities with western philosophy derived from 'the same racially determined talent', and that it was a principal scholarly task of Indology to d emonstrate this fact. Reiterating an axiom of NS doctrine, that 'Wissenschaft in the strict sense of the word is something that could be created only by nordic Indo-Germans', Frauwallner adds, 'From the agreement in scientific character of Indian and European philosophy, we can draw the further conclusion that philosophy as an attempt to explain the world according to scientific method is likewise a typical creation of the Aryan mind.'"

India was important to the Nazis not because they saw it as their ancestral land (they did not), but because it illustrated the Nazi worldview:

1. dynamic white Aryans enter the land of indolent dark people;
2. they subjugate them in a racially-conceived caste system, a kind of Apartheid;
3. in spite of trying for racial purity, they succumb too often to the charms of native women, so they racially degenerate; and therefore,
4. they ended up overpowered by whiter races, first the Turks and then, mercifully, their own purer Aryan cousins from Britain.

Since the mid-19th century, this worldview had already been promoted by Britain, meanwhile it had been fortified by the ascendence of Darwinism ("struggle for life", "survival of the fittest") and finally acquired an extra intensity in NS Germany.

In the first years of the renewed debate on the Indo-European homeland, it was a common confusion that the Out-of-India theory, disappeared after Schlegel but now back in strength, had something NS about it, e.g. Zydenbos 1993. This confusion was deliberately fostered by some Indian "secularists" trying to criminalize the Indian homeland hypothesis, e.g. Sikand 1993. In reality, the NS theorists as well as the NS textbooks emphasized and highlighted the putative European homeland and concomitant invasion into India. Zydenbos and Sikand themselves were in Hitler's camp.

The confusion centred on the word *Aryan*, of Sanskrit origin. In NS discourse, this was routinely interpreted in a racial sense, though race was here not just skin colour but also had a cultural component. Thus, both Sanskrit and German could only be such precise and structured languages because they emanated from racially predisposed nations (and the "degeneration" of Sanskrit to the much looser modern Indian languages is thus a consequence of racial degeneration). In vulgar propaganda, the linguistic, cultural and biological dimensions were completely confounded, but this even influenced high-brow discourse:

> "An example of this more sophisticated orientalism is the work of Paul Thieme", Harvard Sanskritist Michael Witzel's revered teacher, esp. his "analysis of the Sanskrit word ārya, where at the end he adverts to the main point of his research: to go beyond India in order to catch the 'distant echo of Indo-germanic customs'." (Pollock 1993:91)

From Adolf Hitler's mouth, no words in praise of Hinduism are known. A few expressions of contempt, yes, e.g. Subhas Bose's army: "Hitler himself ridiculed the 3000-man strong regiment of Indians." (Hartog 2001:iii) But there is one statement of importance in the present context. Among Hitler's rare utterances on the Hindus was a racial interpretation of the AIT. These are his own words (Jäckel & Kuhn 1980:195, quoting Hitler 1920):

> *"Wir wissen, dass die Hindu in Indien ein Volk sind, gemischt aus den hochstehenden arischen Einwanderern und der dunkelschwarzen Urbevölkerung, und dass dieses Volk heute die folgen trägt; denn es ist auch das Sklavenvolk einer Rasse, die uns in vielen Punkten nahezu als zweite Judenheit erscheinen darf."* *("We know that the Hindus in India are a people mixed from the lofty Aryan immigrants and the dark-black aboriginal population, and that this people is bearing the consequences today; for it is also the slave people of a race that almost seems like a second Jewry.")*

For Grünendahl, this is merely an example of how the primary sources of German history contradict the free-for-all that amateurs make of it. Joseph (2016) dismisses Grünendahl's many factual data as only to be expected from a "German", an *ad hominem* against a whole nation, as well as a covert admission that he cannot refute even one of them. Grünendahl (2012:196) had noted the same inability in an earlier Pollock defender, Vishwa Adluri (2011): when challenging the many facts mustered by Grünendahl, Adluri neither shows Grünendahl's data to be incorrect, nor does he bring other facts proving Pollock's case: "a pitiable want of judgment as well as evidence."

But the objective finality of Pollock's thesis is more specific, viz. to blacken the Indian homeland hypothesis by associating it with

National-Socialism. Reality, however, is just the opposite: more even than other Europeans, the Nazis espoused and upheld a westerly homeland and the invasion hypothesis. This invasion happens to be a corner-stone of Pollock's worldview, with invader castes guilty of expropriating and subjugating the natives, who became the lower castes. Hitler-Pollock, same struggle!

To end this discussion on an element of nuance, however, we have to note an odd passage. Though Pollock repeatedly affirms NS belief in what is nowadays called the Out-of-India theory, and assumes this throughout his paper, honesty demands that we mention how one time, very cursorily, he nods to the opposite (and true) scenario:

> "From among the complexities of NS analysis of the Urheimat question it is worth calling attention to the way the nineteenth-century view expressed by Schlegel was reversed: the original Indo-Europeans were now variously relocated in regions of the Greater German Reich; German thereby became the language of the core *(Binnensprache)*, whereas Sanskrit was transformed into one of its peripheral, 'colonial' forms."
>
> (Pollock 1993: 91-92)

Even this is not entirely true, for the dominant opinion was that the homeland was to the east or southeast of Germany, while even the SS research department *Ahnenerbe* explored locating the homeland in Atlantis: fanciful, but at least outside Germany. Still, Pollock's statement does justice to the NS worldview by denying India the honour of being the homeland. It explains why we often see a shift in the focus of NS Indologists from India to "Indo-European" or "Aryan" issues, racially identified with Nordic. Thus, in 1934 Jakob Hauer still wrote on "Indo-Aryan" metaphysics of struggle, but in 1937 he published on the religious history of the "Indo-Europeans". Pollock's own enumeration of supposedly India-related activities usually confuses "Indian" with "Indo-European", i.e. "Aryan" or essentially "Nordic". It is only by confusing those two that an impression of a NS orientation towards India can be created.

National-Socialism and the Sanskrit tradition

Two factors of a seeming connection between Hinduism and NS Germany are unavoidable: the swastika and the term *ārya*. About the swastika, the matter is simple: it does not come from India. It is a more widespread symbol, very prominent e.g. in Troy, excavated by a German, and part of Greek history which was a decisive inspiration to Germany's academic culture. It was also very common in the Baltic area, where German army veterans formed Freikorps militias to defeat the Bolsheviks in 1918-20. When they came home, often to join nationalist parties, they brought the swastika with them. (More detail in Elst 2007) The NS view was that it was Nordic in origin, and that it only became common in India after having been imported by the Aryans.

As Sünner (1999:66) puts it: "the hooked cross, which the Nordic cult of light carried into the Orient". Indeed, this was part of a general septentriocentric worldview: "Unconcerned about historic truth, their builders were termed as 'Indo-European Urvolk' and 'heroes of the North', who later co-founded the civilizations of Egypt, India and Persia." (Sünner 1999:60-61) India was not in the picture, except as a distant horizon to be conquered and civilized by Norsemen.

As for Aryan: "The term ārya itself merits intellectual-historical study (and I mean diachronic analysis, not static etymology) for premodern India at least of the sort *Arier* has received for modern Europe." (Pollock 1993:107) True, Hindus too might learn a lot from realizing that this term is historical, that it has gone through changes, and that the classical meaning "noble" (a meaning unattested in the *Ṛg-Veda*) has mundane roots too. Yet, Pollock does no more than focus on the *Manu Smṛti,* fairly late and worn-out as a supposed repository of caste teachings and anti-egalitarian musings about *ārya* vs. *anārya.*

Moreover, Pollock (1993: 107-8) brings in the concept of race: "From such factors as the semantic realm of the distinction *ārya/anārya* and the biogenetic map of inequality (along with less theorized material, from Vedic and epic literature, for instance), it may seem warranted to speak about a 'pre-form of racism' in early India (Geissen 1988: 48ff.), especially in a discussion of indigenous 'orientalism', since in both its classic colonial and its National Socialist form orientalism is inseparable from racism."

That is certainly the NS reading, but from a top Indologist, we might have expected an explanation of whether this was the Indians' own intended reading. Pollock doesn't go into this question at all but confidently assumes an indubitably positive answer. To exonerate him, we might take this as merely a logical application of the Aryan invasion scenario, firmly established since the mid-19th century: the Aryans came in, met a different race of aboriginals, and imposed a racial Apartheid on them: the caste system. So, in a way, the case against Pollock is the case against Western Indology as a whole.

His arguments about the inequality fostered by the *Śāstras* thus always has a racial dimension. Caste is too big a subject to argue out here, but let us notice that he has no problem mustering incriminating quotations excluding low-castes from Vedic knowledge. He does acknowledge feeble dissenting voices, such as the early Mīmāṁsā thinker Bādari, who argued that Śūdras too can build Vedic fires for sacrifice, since "the Śūdra desires heaven, too (. . .) and what is it in a sacrifice that any man can do but that the Śūdra is unable to do?" (Pollock 1993:109) But the over-all picture is decidedly inegalitarian. However, inequality is a nearly equally distributed good, and for that value, the Nazis could have found inspiration in other societies, if they needed any at all, such as the Arab or colonial slave systems.

Inequality yes, but racial, no. All this depends on the racial reading of Sanskrit concepts, starting with the enumeration of four social functions (without a word about how to recruit for them) in late-Vedic hymn RV 10.90, "the locus classicus in the Veda" for caste division. Even "the biology" is said to be "of course latent in the RV passage", though he does not say how and other readers cannot find a trace of it. (Pollock 1993:125) All this follows from the Aryan invasion scenario, and on this point, there is no chance of refuting Pollock unless the homeland debate is waged all over.

At any rate, none of these interesting musings about Indian society played any role whatsoever in NS policies. Pollock (1993:86-87) is only projecting his own focus when his Indologist's eye recognizes caste phenomena in NS policies:

> "The myth of Aryan origins burst from the world of dream into that of reality when the process of what I suggest we think of as an internal colonization of Europe began to be, so to speak, shastrically codified, within two months of the National Socialists' capturing power (April 1933). The 'Law on the Reconstitution of the German Civil Service', the 'Law on the Overcrowding of German Schools', and a host of supplementary laws and codicils of that same month were the first in a decade dense with legal measures designed to exclude Jews and other minority communities from the apparatuses of power (including

> 'authoritative' power, the schools and universities), and to regulate a wide range of social, economic, and biological activities."

Finally, another point of difference between NS racism and caste society is this. The relation between the Germans and the "inferior" races was conceived as hierarchical, but the NS conception of German society was not as a hierarchy: all members of the master race were deemed reasonably equal. Hitler himself had climbed up from down below; there was no objection against social mobility. Germans were not to be held inside the class they happened to be born into, unlike the low-caste Hindus in Pollock's oft-stated view.

In this connection, Hitler himself objected to the idea of a hereditary priesthood. Though he doesn't name it, this could be applied to the Brahmin caste: "The Catholic Church recruits its clergy in principle from all classes of society, without discrimination. A simple cowherd can become cardinal. That is why the Church remains combattive." (Pierik 2012:83, quoting Hitler's table talk of 2 November 1941) So, even in his anti-Brahminism, Pollock finds himself in Hitler's camp.

The banalization of criminalizing Hinduism

In his conclusion, Pollock digresses about the future of his scholarly discipine. There, he takes for granted the connection he has earlier posited between Sanskrit and the Holocaust. In an entirely non-polemical tone, he off-hand builds on this putative connection: "How, concretely, does one do Indology beyond the Raj and Auschwitz in a world of pretty well tattered scholarly paradigms?" (Pollock 1993:114)

In the process of disinformation, an idea is first launched and argued in high-brow papers like the *New York Review* or the *Economic and Political Weekly*; subsequently it is presented as the received wisdom in more general media, like the *Washington Post* or the *Times of India*; but the final stage is when the idea is presented as a matter of course, and conveyed through popular media, women's magazines etc. That is what completes the instilling of false ideas in the popular mind.

Similarly, to promote an idea intended to become a fixture in our worldview, it is useful to repeat it, first as a topical proposal to be proven, then as a theorem deemed to have been proven, finally as a truism on which other proposals can safely be built.

Yet, we don't hold Pollock as an individual guilty of this disinformation. Though his authoritative voice does its bit to determine the Zeitgeist, he was mainly surfing on an already-existing Zeitgeist.

Firstly, the tendency to project the Nazi episode onto something morbid and unique in the more distant German past, and particularly the exoticization of 19th-century Germany's supposed self-doubt and search for an identity, was already very common in the preceding decades (e.g. Poliakov 1971), and still is to some extent.

Secondly, the link between Hinduism (as well as Lamaism) and Nazi culture had already been proposed by a number of writers. Moreover, it converges with a widespread revulsion among Westerners against the caste system, which they liken to slavery and identify, through the Aryan invasion hypothesis, with racism. This misses the warlike element in National-Socialism, but that is slightly made up for by all the stories about Hindu riots and by the symmetry fallacy whenever Muslim violence comes in the news: "Ah, but all religions do it; Hinduism must have a similar terrorism." Even then, it still doesn't have the element of "genocide", but Pollock remains determined to read that into it.

Conclusion

It is one thing to hold a view that, upon analysis, turns out to be mistaken. To err is but human. However, one should become extra careful when the view one expresses, is an allegation. It becomes even more serious when it is the worst allegation one can possibly make, viz. the accusation of responsibility for the Holocaust.

The situation with allegations is simple: either you prove them, or you yourself are guilty of slander. This then can be held against Pollock: he has made a grave allegation, yet has failed to buttress it with proof, though not for lack of trying.

The question which Hindus should contemplate, then, is this one. Should the Sanskrit tradition be given in care to a professor of Sanskrit who stands by such a grave though false allegation against it?

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Part II

"Death" of Sanskrit

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Chapter 4

"Sanskrit is dead", and that's okay

– Naresh P. Cuntoor

Abstract

In this paper a critical review of Pollock's hypothesis of the death of Sanskrit is presented. Using a tenuous analogy with European languages and history, his hypothesis advocates Sanskrit's symbiotic relationship with royal power as a means of ensuring power. It claims that Indian kings exploited aspects of Sanskrit such as grammar and śleṣa to enhance their political status. In turn, royal patronage is said to favor Sanskrit over vernacular languages. As a result Sanskrit enjoyed a dominant status until vernacular languages grew in strength and acceptability. This narrative, he avers, is inspired by the European history of cosmopolis in attempting to establish a similar status for Sanskrit, and later for Kannada. Once Sanskrit ceded ground to vernacular languages, it faced precipitous decline to face death by the turn of 17th century CE, despite valiant revival efforts made by the Muslim rulers in northern India, and later by the English colonialists, he opines. Further, Sanskrit's death is considered insignificant by him because there was little original knowledge production in Sanskrit as it is. I shall describe several instances of empirical data being sacrificed seemingly because of the necessities of narrative-building. The paper raises a few questions for discussion as part of future work.

Introduction

One of the foundational languages of Indian civilization, Sanskrit continues to have a deep and wide influence in today's India through language, culture and science. Its reach in all these dimensions have long transcended geographical boundaries of the Indian subcontinent. Lulled perhaps by the deep and continuing influence of Sanskrit or the self-evident nature of Sanskrit, Indian scholarship has failed to articulate the position of Sanskrit with sufficient clarity. Even when its position has been articulated in a manner which defies belief and evidence (Pollock 2006), the arguments have not been addressed thoroughly. In this paper, I shall present a critical summary of Pollock's theory regarding the death of Sanskrit based primarily on the book *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men* (Pollock 2006) and based on "The Death of Sanskrit" (Pollock 2001).

The Language of the Gods in the World of Men, as the title suggests, presents the death of Sanskrit, and argues that its death is not a significant loss as far as knowledge is concerned. This is for two main reasons: there was a vigorous exchange of ideas within India and with the larger ancient world. So Indian knowledge, if any, survives in various forms. Second, Indian knowledge, in large measure was non-existent till the advent of the modern era.

This paper is divided into four main sections:

1. *Preliminaries*: Here I shall discuss the form of language used in Pollock (2006) and its implications, and present a brief historical background of Greek and Latin development.
2. *Sanskrit as a source of power*: In this section, the language characteristics that are considered a source of power are described.
3. *Sanskrit cosmopolis*: The concept of cosmopolis and its Sanskrit nature are summarized.
4. *The death of Sanskrit*: Finally, the manner of Sanskrit's death is described.

1 Preliminaries

Before addressing the substance of Pollock's arguments, his writing style deserves notice. In academic literature, the usage of complicated writing style may be completely natural, even if it is unnecessary. I am reminded of the editor R.H.Fiske (author of the *Dictionary of Unendurable English*) who considered such a style of writing as one that encouraged illiteracy. The reader seeks clarity when startling claims such as the death of Sanskrit are made. One is interested in understanding the nature of the death being described, and the evidence presented in its support. Redundant words and meaningless tautologies (e.g., "when literature *became literature*", Pollock (2006:4) hardly make the writing clear. Style cannot be ignored completely either, especially because Pollock's writings merit serious consideration by traditional scholars who need to thoroughly understand the arguments before attempting an informed response. Using a convoluted writing style (as Pollock does) is hardly the best way of conducting a conversation.

It could be argued that making the writings accessible to traditional Indian scholars is the work of others including multilingual Indian scholars. There have been such attempts, e.g., K.V. Akshar's monograph in Kannada (Akshar 2003), which describes two of Pollock's papers that are relevant to the present discussion. At the end of the monograph, P. Chandrashobhi writes an epilogue which re-summarizes Pollock's arguments and makes mild criticisms at the end. Now this is not to say that writing style is the only (or the main) factor preventing sharper academic discourse. But to the extent that it does, academic discourse has remained limited and bounded to western circles.

I shall now turn to Pollock's hypothesis regarding the death of Sanskrit. The rather dramatic evocation of 'death' has been criticized by Hanneder using several examples from Kashmir, Vijayanagara and modern day India to show its untenability. I shall return to the metaphor of death later.

It is instructive to see a few examples of the immediate impact of Pollock's work. Academic work by influential scholars inevitably creates amplifying echoes. For instance, even the title of Kaviraj(2005) makes it more dramatic by calling it "the sudden death." The arguments quickly become accepted as "compelling" accounts of the "Sanskrit Cosmopolis" (Cox 2011). The theory once completely accepted, becomes a foundation for further theorizing. Further work (Gould 2008) unabashedly praise the theory and its proponent as "brilliant", "great" and in even more effusive terms which seem jarring in academic papers. These papers are mentioned as illustrative examples of how Pollock's arguments have quickly become accepted theory (notwithstanding a few critical academic reviews). The theory never makes a pretense of being a hypothesis that needs to be justified and vetted by knowledgeable peers. (Hypotheses are subject to empirical scrutiny. Those that withstand scrutiny become theories. Hypotheses that are contradicted by data are discarded. This norm seems to have been completely ignored in the present case).

Background: Greek and Latin

No discussion of the history of the West can ignore the importance of ancient Greece because of its contribution in the development of literature, science, rule of law and so on. In this section, I shall briefly summarize the history of Greek and Latin based on the description in Freeman (2004). In this paper, the description is superficial because the goal is limited to providing a comparative basis for the description of Sanskrit that follows.

The Greek or Hellenic ideal is perhaps best personified by Homer's epics *the Iliad* and *the Odyssey*. Homer described the importance of virtue in citizens and its necessity for developing virtuous city-states. The Hellenic ideal placed great emphasis on virtue in all aspects of human life. At this stage of civilization, Greece was a collection of city-states (*poleis*). The Greek city-states retained their separate identity despite their close connection, as exemplified in Herodotus' characterization of "the same stock and the same speech, our shared temples of the gods and religious rituals, our similar customs."

Among the Greek city-states, two groups of people, the Spartans and the Athenians are important because of their strength. Rivalry between the two groups resulted in the Peloponnesian War in the 5th c. BCE in which Athens was destroyed. Sparta emerged victorious as the pre-eminent force in the region. Shortly thereafter, the nature of city-states saw a dramatic change. Following long and persistent wars, the city-states could not live up to their earlier ideal. After seeing his own teacher murdered, even Plato saw a need for a reformulation of the idea of democracy. City-states lost their identity and the new political entity that took their place was larger. Citizens, whose virtues were earlier celebrated, now became subjects. Greek became the common language (*Koine*). This was the nature of the Greek cosmopolis which began around the time of Alexander's death. Power and subjugation may be said to defining characteristics of the newly evolved cosmopolis.

About a century after Alexander, the Punic Wars were a series of three large wars between Rome and Carthage. During the course of these wars, Rome gradually established its supremacy, became the new dominant empire and absorbed Greece (among several other parts of Europe and Africa) within it. With Roman victory, Latin spread and became the common language in the empire. A language that was earlier largely confined to central Italy, Latin gradually became the dominant language of large parts of Europe and Africa - especially the western Mediterranean. Regions that previously had no common language became linguistically connected by Latin.

On the other hand, in eastern Mediterranean (e.g., Syria, Egypt) the Roman Empire built strategic alliances with local kingdoms instead of establishing their own rule. In these regions, Greek had a much deeper root and would maintain its preeminence till the arrival of Islam. In this region, Latin did not make significant inroads compared to its western counterpart.

With the fall of the Roman Empire in 5th century CE, Latin lost its political backing. Lacking central control, regional variations took hold in Latin over the next 4-5 centuries. This phase of Latin, marked by its non-standard nature, is called Vulgar Latin. Gradually different branches of Vulgar Latin evolved into Romance languages (the term refers to their Roman origin). These became today's French, Spanish, Portuguese and other European languages. During this period of evolution of Vulgar Latin, another form of Latin, called Medieval Latin evolved mostly as a literary language. Its grammar and syntax changed significantly as it had now become a scholarly language, rather than a spoken language. During the middle Ages, its usage declined further, as Romance languages began to flourish. Around this time, in the 13th century CE, Dante made a clean break, shunned the use of (Medieval) Latin which had become a language of the educated, and used Italian, the language of the masses, to compose poetry. Church Latin however, continued to be used in liturgy.

Thus Latin, which began as a language in a small region in Italy, acquired dominant status with Roman victories and became the common language of the Roman Empire - especially in the western part of the empire. It did not (possibly could not) seek to displace or challenge the position of Greek in eastern Mediterranean. The eastern empire which became the Byzantine Empire continued to use Greek even though the official language was Latin. (Latin's official status in the Byzantine Empire was abolished in 7th c. CE, restoring Greek's status). Much of this region would eventually yield to Islamic influence. In the western region, Latin eventually evolved into Romance languages because of a lack of central control.

2 Sanskrit as a Source of Power

A recurring theme in Pollock (2006) is identification (or superimposition) of events in time that are marked by profound changes in the premodern Indian (South Asian) landscape. The terms "premodern India" and "premodern South Asia" are used interchangeably, although the latter seems to be the preferred term in Pollock (2006) and Pollock 2001. Words, phrases and languages are an inherent source of power in Pollock's writings. Sanskrit and English terms are re-interpreted as long as they allow for a predetermined conclusion. Two examples of re-interpretation are briefly described presently.

1. **Sanskrit terms re-interpreted:** Terms such as *pāramārthika sat* and *vyāvahārika sat* are introduced in the sense of "absolute perspective of science" and "traditions of language thought" (Pollock (2006:65) without providing any reason for forcibly re-interpreting these terms to ascribe notions that are not supported by their typical use in existing literature. The purpose of using these terms in the newly interpreted sense is clear enough. The Sanskrit terms - and their stated Latin equivalents (regardless of the correctness in equivalence) - provide a veneer of plausibility to support his explanation of Buddhists' use of Sanskrit in scriptural texts though it is not used in other non-scriptural texts. The two forms of *sat* take on new meaning, *artha* becomes power (Section 3), and so on.

2. **English terms re-interpreted:** Terms such as *aestheticization of power, orientalism, cosmopolis*, and so on are familiar to the Western audience. Aestheticization and orientalism have a long history in India-related discourse. For now, I will focus on the term *cosmopolis*. Pollock explicitly states that the notion of 'cosmopolis' in its usual sense of the word (i.e., in the European context) is nothing like the sense with which he uses it in the Indian context. However, the connotation of the term 'cosmopolis' as used in the European context is applied directly to support the hypothesis of Sanskrit as a source of power. In the description of Pollock (2006), power takes center-stage in the "Sanskrit cosmopolis", just as it did in the European (sociopolitical) cosmopolis. In other words, the disclaimer of terms having different meanings in the European and Indian contexts becomes a distinction without a difference. Just as in the case of *pāramārthika sat* and *vyāvahārika sat*, the wildly differing connotations of cosmopolis in two contexts as used make little difference.

After ascribing new meanings to existing terms, the original meanings of the terms are invoked to arrive at startling conclusions. For example, though the term cosmopolis is used in a very different sense from its usual meaning in the European historical context, its implication - of certain empires and languages establishing domineering influence - is stated as the result of creation of the cosmopolis. Sanskrit becomes the dominating force used by Hindu kings (e.g., kings of the Vijayanagara and Śrīvijaya kingdoms) seeking to establish their political and social supremacy by quashing existing local languages. The form of domination and power also differs from what is observed in the European context. Several caveats of how the sense of cosmopolis and power differs in the Indian and European contexts are indeed described at length. Yet the conclusion strips the caveats away and presents a narrative of Sanskrit being "an oppressive power that had to die" before new or local languages had a chance to flourish.

In the remaining part of this section, I shall discuss the nature of power, the tools of power ascribed to Sanskrit and the resulting implications.

2.1 Form of power in European and Indian contexts

Section 1 described the origin, spread and decline of Latin. Let us now turn to Sanskrit and the power ascribed to it. In this section, I shall first summarize related arguments made in a few different places in Pollock (2006) and then briefly discuss a few questions that arise as a result of the formulation of the hypothesis in Pollock (2006).

No single local source can be traced as the original home of Sanskrit, neither can any military-political or military-religious force be said to be responsible for its spread (Pollock 2006:262). Further, when Medieval Latin faced a precipitous decline in literary production, no such fall can be detected in Sanskrit literature. Poets, philosophers and scientists continued to use Sanskrit in the second millennium. So, clearly, a straightforward equivalence between Sanskrit and Latin is non-existent, and no attempt at establishing such equivalence is made in Pollock (2006). But power and rupture of a different kind is described.

The first written literature in Latin is traced to 240 BCE when a Greek play was adapted into Latin by a Greek slave, Livius Andronicus. A little later, Naevius composed an epic poem about the first Punic war. The Sanskrit equivalent offered here is as follows. Vedic literature has taken form in the first millennium BCE. With writing having been invented in the third century BCE, a new form of literature *kāvya* is said to take root. Until the first century CE, all literature is primarily Vedic, which retains an other-worldliness and isolation (Pollock 2006:39). No non-Vedic literature is allowed to take shape in Sanskrit because Sanskrit intellectuals are "bounded and limited". While Sanskrit is a source of sacred power, Prakrit is used for political and other *laukika* (worldly) purposes. For example, the Brahmanical Sātavāhana kings used Prakrit for administration and literature (e.g., *Gāthāsaptaśatī*). On the other hand, the Shakas, who were foreign rulers, used and promoted Sanskrit at the cost of Prakrit (Pollock 2006:72). In this sense, Sanskrit becomes a source of power that a foreign ruler can appropriate to assert authority.

Now if Sanskrit was "bounded and limited" in its scope and confined to sacral rites, it needed a catalyst to infuse newness and broaden its appeal. Foreign rulers such as Shakas, and much later, the Vijayanagara kings provided such an impetus in the political sense when they sought to occupy power using Sanskrit as a means of establishing their supremacy. And rulers such as Rudradāman and Buddhist poets provided the needed catalyst to liberate Sanskrit for its oppressive masters. Just as an outsider, Livius who was Greek and a slave, was responsible for the introduction of Latin literature, outsiders such as Shakas and Buddhists were responsible for introducing Sanskrit as a medium for *kāvya.*

I shall use Thapar (2015)'s description of Rudradāman to provide context. With the advent of Kushanas, the Shakas had moved further south into western India. Here Rudradāman was a mid-second century BCE Kshatrapa king. His Junagarh inscription in Sanskrit, the earliest of its kind that has been discovered, provides a detailed account of his activities. Instead of using Prakrit, why did he use Sanskrit in his inscriptions? Thapar's account provides at least two reasons for Rudradāman's use of Sanskrit, without suggesting a definitive answer. He could have used Sanskrit to endear himself to orthodoxy to establish his legitimacy as a ruler. Or he could have anticipated the winds of change which was bringing about parallel patronage in court circles. In Pollock (2006), no such hesitation is even hinted at in arriving at a conclusion that Rudradāman used Sanskrit to establish his legitimacy as a ruler. Similarly, Buddhist poets who had already composed the *Jātaka* tales in Pali, switched to Sanskrit to compose literature (e.g., Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita*).

2.2 *Praśasti* and power

Rudradāman is important for another reason. The Junagarh inscription is considered an early example of *praśasti.* In this discussion, I shall juxtapose the discussion of *praśasti* in Pollock (2006) and Thapar (2015). According to Thapar (2015), *praśasti* was still evolving as a literary style at the time, and would find clearer form in Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita.* A marginal activity initially, it "later" became important enough to "affect the structure of the political economy" (Thapar 2015:225). (Thapar's account does not specify the time frame to which "later" refers). Pollock considers that *praśasti* attained final form by the time of Pallavas (7th c. CE). It is interesting to note that *praśasti* as a form of literature is accorded significant importance in Pollock (2006), whereas the historical account in Thapar is less eager to embrace its importance ("...one hesitates to take it literally" -Thapar 2015:283-4).

Praśasti plays a central role in Pollock (2006) especially when trying to establish equivalence with Latin. Moreover the occurrence of *praśasti-s* is portrayed as a "sudden", "startling, nearly simultaneous" event not just in the Indian subcontinent but in Southeast Asia as well. On the other hand, Thapar (2015) describes a gradual development of *praśasti* literature. In the absence of evidence of any large scale military intervention before that of the Cholas in 11th c. CE, mercantile and religious interactions are said to be the basis for the spread of Sanskrit to South East Asia in early centuries CE. During this time, according to Pollock (2006), Sanskrit becomes the key to power because of the proliferation of *praśasti*. The historical description of politics and trade in Thapar (2015) mentions the presence of Indian merchants in Myanmar, Oc-eo (near the Gulf of Siam) and so on. More interestingly, similarities between pre-existing cultures in Southeast Asia and South India in activities such as rice cultivation and burial are described. Such exchanges "evolved into trade and incipient urbanism." Again, a deeper, more long-lasting, connection is discussed in Thapar (2015) unlike Pollock (2006). Whereas Thapar (2015) discusses a measured, historical account of events in India and Southeast Asia, Pollock (2006) presents a larger narrative without describing alternative possibilities.

Let us briefly look at the case of *praśasti* in Kannada as described in Pollock (2006). The earliest evidence of writing in Kannada is available from the 5th c. CE, but the earliest *praśasti* and earliest literature is said to be from the 9th c. CE - both intimately tied to the royal court. In other words, analogous to the case of Sanskrit, *kāvya* and *praśasti* is said to emerge at the same time. In the description of the *praśasti* of Krishnaraja (Pollock 2006:334), it is said that this is the first of its kind in Kannada. Among the king's titles, three types of words are seen: (1) Kannada compound words, (2) Sanskrit compound words and (3) words that are formed by compounding a Kannada word and a Sanskrit word by means of an *ari-samāsa* which is generally frowned upon. This mixing of form of titles is made out as a "careful balancing" of "globalizing and localizing registers".

A late 9th c. CE inscription of King Erayappa is then discussed as an example of path-breaking vernacularity in Kannada country. The quoted passage of long Sanskrit words interspersed with Kannada words is described as an example of a new lexicon, a new "mode of representation" (Pollock 2006:335). The discussion does not mention however that part of the phraseology *...nirmala-tārāpati...* is reminiscent of the earliest available Kannada inscription (i.e., the Halmidi inscription). (I shall briefly return to the Kannada writing discussion in Section 2.4.)

In Pollock (2006), the description of the development of Kannada language and power may be summarized as follows:

1. Though evidence of writing in Kannada is available from the 5th c. onwards, the earliest works of Kannada literature in a distinctly recognizable form is not available till the 9th century.
2. In the 9th century, two forms of literature arose almost simultaneously – *kāvya* and *praśasti.*
3. Kannada literary development and its royal patronage had a symbiotic relationship.

2.3 Tools of Power

As discussed above, Sanskrit is presented as a source of legitimizing power. The nature of its power is further described by the following characteristics:

1. Lack of geographical grounding
2. Written literature
3. Aesthetics in Sanskrit literature
4. Grammar
5. *śleṣa*

These factors are briefly explained next.

Sanskrit, it is said, was "at home everywhere, and nowhere." It has no single, traceable place of origin. This meant that no single group of people can claim ownership of Sanskrit. But those who want power use it where and when needed. In this sense, Sanskrit finds a home everywhere. Without a clearly identifiable geographical localization, on the contrary, it finds a home nowhere.

Writing plays a crucial part in Pollock's theory. To begin with it, a new term, *literization* is introduced to describe the phase when a language acquires a written form. (*Literarization*, on the other hand, refers to the phase when a language starts producing literature). Three reasons are described in the introductory chapter of Pollock (2006): (a) Writing claims an authority that orality cannot. Speaking is natural, but writing is not. (b) Writing is richer than oral, and allows for the examination of language itself, (c) "Writing makes possible the production of history of a sort the oral is incapable of producing". All this is stated without elaboration.

Using an idea that was promoted in the 1930's, Pollock (2006) opines that Sanskrit - specifically works such as Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa* and various *praśastis* - attracted power because of their aesthetic nature. The theory of aestheticization of power and politics has been criticized on several grounds (Jay 1992). A general criticism of the theory however, is insufficient to test the validity of the theory as applied in the specific contexts of Sanskrit and Kannada.

For a language to acquire power, in addition to written status, grammar is said to be a prerequisite. Sanskrit managed to attract power because of its highly developed grammar. In turn the political power was interested in ensuring grammar's place. Bhoja's patronage of poetry and grammar is described in detail to imply that his strength and position of power was at least in part because of the patronage. Statements such as "*rājani kavau sarvo lōkaḥ kaviḥ syāt*" are quoted as examples of kings using proper language as a means of power. Further, Patañjali's adage of "*ekaḥ śabdaḥ saṁyak jñātaḥ śāstrānvitaḥ suprayuktaḥ svarge lōke kāmadhuk bhavati*" is used to justify the relevance of proper language to *dharma* (and hence power) (Pollock 2006:183). Languages acquire such political power when their grammar reaches maturity.

The use of *śleṣa* attained an impressive level of sophistication in Sanskrit. Its evolution is then connected to the power of politics using arguments that echo the theory of aestheticization of power. Similarly '*alaṅkāra*' becomes equally powerful in their ability to influence political power through their use in *praśasti-s*. Sanskrit then becomes a tool to enhance reality through its unique abilities in *ślēṣa*, other *alaṅkāra-s* and so on. The king then exploits this power to legitimize and maintain his power.

2.4 Some Questions

In the analysis in Pollock (2006) described above, several factors are completely or largely ignored. I shall mention a few items below. The discussion in this section will be brief in order to limit the scope of the paper to *pūrva-pakṣa* and not expand it into an *uttarapakṢa.* The questions are raised here because they are an extension of the *pūrvapakṣha* arguments themselves.

2.4.1 *A long tradition of oral literature*

Only written literature is recognized by him as literature for consideration, and not orally transmitted literature. Three reasons are stated for this treatment (Section 2.3) – authority, richness and ability to produce history. Pollock (2006) states that writing possesses these three faculties whereas oral tradition does not. If writing is to be accorded such primacy over oral literature, then it is natural for the reader to expect a careful and reasoned justification of the stated position.

Authority: It is difficult to understate the impact of the Vedas, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* in the Indian context. All these forms of literature continued to be transmitted orally for several generations before they were written down. Did their stature or authority change in the minds of people after they were written down? Pollock (2006) does not address this question.

Richness: In addition to the richness of story-telling in the *itihāsa-s,* the *sūtra* literature – especially those of Pāṇini, can hardly be faulted for lack of richness, imagination or creativity.

Ability to produce history: The argument that writing, unlike oral tradition, can produce history is stated without elaboration in Pollock (2006). It would be interesting to explore this aspect more thoroughly especially in the light of attempts at building history through narratives. For example, songs of the *bhakti* movement in the Dāsa tradition provide a glimpse of the society of their time. Doniger (2009) is another example of historical perspective-taking which relies on oral tradition such as the Veda-s.

2.4.2 *Mahābhāṣya references to existing literature*

A central tenet of the thesis of Pollock (2006) is that Sanskrit *kāvya* literature began around the 1st c. CE. References to older traditions of literature described in the *Mahābhāṣya* are stated in the book, but quickly set aside citing difficulties in dating the *Mahābhāṣya* itself. Whatever difficulties there may be regarding its dating, even taking the late estimates of its period, we are left with more than a century and a half between references in *Mahābhāṣya* to *kāvya*, and to the starting period of *kāvya* as per Pollock (2006). This large difference is difficult to reconcile.

The question of whether older traditions of *kāvya* to which *Mahābhāṣya* alluded are to be considered as literature in the sense of Pollock, remains unresolved.

2.4.3 *Pāṇini's reference to drama*

In addition to *Mahābhāṣya*'s literary references, Pāṇini *sūtra*-s contain references to dramaturgy (Krishnashastri 2002:28). These do not appear in the analysis in Pollock (2006). Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* which is the earliest extant work in its field is discussed in Pollock (2006) and its impact on development of literary analysis in Indian languages is described. Several post-Bharata treatises and their influence on analytical texts of vernacular language are discussed as well.

However the silence on references to older texts is somewhat perplexing. For the purposes of establishing the age of beginning of a field, even if the details of the older texts' discussion are unknown, can the older texts be summarily dismissed, as advanced by the necessities of narrative-building?

2.4.4 *Regional variations in Sanskrit and Prakrit*

Sanskrit as described by Pāṇini, Kātyayana and 'Patañjali', showed regional variations. From their descriptions, it is clear that the regional differences were not a hindrance to the development or usage of language itself. Similarly, the variety of Prakrits are well-documented, e.g., in *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*. This long-standing diversity within Sanskrit and Prakrit does not support a centralized, uniform view of the language. Further, Vedic Sanskrit exhibits even greater diversity in forms, as recognized by all-encapsulating descriptions such as "*bahulam chandasi*" by the grammarians. Given this diversity and equal importance accorded to different usages, the analogy of Latin is puzzling as far as power and politics is concerned.

If indeed language is to be seen through a European lens, with a strong power attribute, how does Pollock (2006) reconcile the absence of attempts to assert dominance of one form of the language over another?

2.4.5 *Parallel literary traditions of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramśa*

As seen in dramas and bilingual poems, poets did not hesitate to simultaneously employ several languages. And we see that Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramśa flourished simultaneously. So we are left to reconcile conflicting factors. On the one hand, we observe fluidity in language usage from early times. On the other, Pollock (2006) seeks to identify rigid events of birth and death in fairly dramatic terms.

Even in modern times, music compositions exhibit an interesting linguistic fluidity. Compositions that are generally categorized as Kannada or Telegu compositions (e.g., several compositions of Muttayya Bhāgavatar and Mysore Vāsudevācārya), are primarily in Sanskrit, except for a stray verb or so. Further, renditions of Prakrit text into Sanskrit have traditionally be called *chāyā* rather than *anuvāda* (or translation). Given this fluidity between languages and their usage, one would anticipate a much more difficult task in trying to identify events such as birth and death of their usage. Such nuanced discussion is largely missing in Pollock (2006).

Similarly, the Kannada/Sanskrit ratios regarding epigraphs of various dynasties (footnote in Pollock 2006:332) requires further elaboration. How are epigraphs classified as Kannada vs Sanskrit? Does the occurrence of a single Kannada word make it a Kannada epigraph?

2.4.6 *A long history of Prakrit literature*

Pollock (2006) considers that the creation of vernacular literature was "intimately related to new conceptions of communities and places".

And its creation is treated as a significant shift that is difficult to explain. It is necessary to better understand the premise of the quest in this regard. If one is to approach the problem of identifying beginnings of literature in a particular language in fairly binary terms, it is necessary to examine the background first. Was the prevailing literature fully in Sanskrit prior to the hypothesized break in literary tradition? This question when posed in the European context seems easier to answer because European literature before Dante, was composed in Latin. In the Indian context, was literature mono-linguistic before the so-called vernacular millennium?

Besides the parallel usage of Sanskrit and Prakrit in literature, there have been several Prakrit texts (as mentioned in Pollock (2006) as well), e.g., Vimalasūri's *Paumacariya* (2nd-4th c. CE), Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā* (earlier than 3rd c. CE). Given this tradition, the reason for treating literature in Kannada or other vernaculars as a startling enterprise is difficult to understand.

2.4.7 *Influence of Prakrit and Apabhramśa on Sanskrit*

Pollock mentions that Prakrit and Apabhramśa influenced Sanskrit (Pollock 2006:65). If Sanskrit's power emanated from its "proper"ness and geographic transcendence or Latinesque uniformity, and further, if, Sanskrit intellectuals were "bounded and limited" - it seems contradictory to expect Sanskrit being influenced by Prakrit or other languages. In the context of Khmer language for example, this is the argument presented - Sanskrit influenced Khmer language, but not the other way around (Pollock 2006:127). If the rulers were indeed trying to find legitimacy through language, they could have allowed for Khmer's influence on Sanskrit. These factors have not been articulated.

2.4.8 *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa's silence on praśasti*

In its detailed discussion of different types of literature, *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (which is referenced in Pollock (2006) as an authority text), does not treat *praśasti* as an all-too serious form of literature. (Neither does the historian Thapar, as mentioned above). If one is to understand *praśasti* as a form of literature that deserves the kind of categorization that

Pollock (2006) demands, then the same could be said of other forms of literature, e.g., *bhakti stotra-s*. After all *stotrakāra-s* in their *phalaśruti* take themselves as seriously as *praśastikāra-s* do!

2.4.9 *Early writing in Kannada*

It is surprising to see that a discussion of *vīragal* is almost completely absent from the discussion of writing in Karnataka in Pollock (2006). (It appears once in the book as a footnote (Pollock 2006:330)). Naik and Naik(1948) considers such stone inscriptions to be peculiar to Karnataka, and mentions that almost all inscriptions of its kind are found in Karnataka. The form and composition of *vīragal-s* tend to follow certain structure as described in Naik and Naik. An early form of writing that is so completely distinctive in style and geography would surely merit a longer discussion when considering the history of writing and literature in a region. One is left to wonder if this omission is to suit the necessities of narrative-building rather than empirical data.

2.4.10 *Knowledge systems such as mathematics and science in Sanskrit*

Literary knowledge begins and ends with *kāvya* and *praśasti* according to Pollock (2006). Surely *śāstra* literature is a valid form of literature too. Varāhamihira is briefly mentioned in Pollock (2006). But long traditions of maths literature, their contributions and impact is largely ignored. For example, the Kerala school of mathematics itself had a long tradition that spanned several centuries during the middle ages. The influence of science and maths is arguably quite important when one considers the longevity and sustainability of societies and civilization. In fact, one could argue that access to scientific and technological texts and practices could be beneficial to a king.

Pollock (2006) does not discuss scientific literature in any detail as it may apply to creation and consolidation of power.

2.4.11 *Rāmāyaṇa's non-conformity with Pāṇinian forms*

If grammar is considered a prerequisite for literary development, and if the *Rāmāyaṇa* took its final literary form in the 1st c. CE much after Pāṇini's grammar, why did the upholders of orthodoxy, the Sanskrit intellectuals who rendered *Rāmāyaṇa* not correct the many non-Pāṇinian forms in the text?

2.4.12 *Early Indonesian kingdoms*

In the discussion of Sanskrit's interaction with Southeast Asian languages, a historical account of kingdoms of the region and their relation to the ancient world is missing. Just as the historical account (e.g., Thapar's account discussed at various points here) can add additional clarity in the Indian context, it is reasonable to expect historical analysis to better illuminate the status of languages and their relationship in Southeast Asia.

As stated at the outset, the above list is not intended to be detailed or comprehensive because of limitations of scope of this paper. However the questions suggest that the necessities of narrative-building in Pollock (2006) seem to propel the consideration of empirical data, instead of allowing empirical data to guide the narrative and subsequent conclusions.

3 Sanskrit Cosmopolis

It is true that the Sanskrit world had a kind of universalism that deserves to be studied. Pollock (2006) uses the term cosmopolis to describe this, despite the limitations of the term (and its historical meaning). Historically, cosmopolitan referred to "a community of free males" (Pollock 2006:12). The Sanskrit cosmopolis had no such characteristic; neither does Pollock (2006) seek to argue from that position. But the term Sanskrit cosmopolis is used to represent three factors:

1. Geographic expanse: The influence of Sanskrit transcended regional and national boundaries.
2. Political dimension: The assumption is that a global identification required a political dimension.
3. The role of Sanskrit: In establishing the political and cultural universalism (to whatever extent), the thesis is that Sanskrit was a critical lynchpin.

Ancient Indians' concept of geography shows some degree of diversity, but some boundaries like the Himalayas recur (Pollock 2006:191). Apart from Indians who self-identified as a people of a common land (despite living in different kingdoms), foreign visitors such as the Greeks and Chinese too, recognize this common identity. Literary sources ranging from *the Mahābhārata* to *Kāmasūtra* display an awareness of cultural unity and diversity across the country. The image of the *Kāvyapuruṣa* which recognizes the holistic nature of different styles and media by giving it an anthropomorphic form is described in detail (Pollock 2006:202-3). While it readily recognizes the universal nature of the *Kāvyapuruṣa* depiction, Pollock (2006) considers it to be "finite" and limiting in the sense that "no other exists outside it." This description is reminiscent of the "limited and bounded" characterization of Sanskrit intellectuals (section 2.1).

Across the country, despite the geographical diversity in which there were differences in Sanskrit usage as attested in the *Mahābhāṣya*, Pollock (2006) argues that the uniformity in the *mārga* discourse is striking. For example, the *vaidarbhī* style in the north was no different from the *vaidarbhī* style in the south. It is not clear why language usage in the sense of preference for certain word forms / verbs as discussed in the *Mahābhāṣya* should affect stylistic choices in composition. A poet using *vaidarbhī* style in a certain part of the country could use word forms which would be distinct from another poet using *vaidarbhī* style in a different part of the country. Pollock (2006) does not seem to make this distinction.

Indian classical musical compositions provide another example of how geographical proximity may not be necessary or sufficient to influence composers' works. The Mysore king Jayachāmarajendra Wodeyar's compositions (20th c. CE) bear a strong resemblance with Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar's who preceded him by a century. The similarity is apparent in the lyrical sense (e.g., preference for long compound words), and in the musical sense (e.g., keeping the *sāhitya* quite tightly bound unlike say, Tyāgarāja). This style is recognizably different from Mysore Vāsudevācārya's, who was the resident musician in the Mysore royal court, and stylistically more strongly related to Tyāgarāja.

Let us return to the second feature of Sanskrit cosmopolis in Pollock (2006) - the political dimension. The discussion uses *Mahābhārata* as an example to describe the political power that characterized the

Sanskrit cosmopolis. It quotes half a verse from the Bhīṣmaparvan to illustrate the paradox of power. To provide clearer context to this line, two verses are quoted below (Sukthankar 1942):

arthasya puruṣo dāso dāsas tvartho na kasyacit |
iti satyaṁ mahārāja baddho'smy arthēna kauravaiḥ|| 6.41.36 ||
atas tvāṁ klībavad vākyaṁ bravīmi kurunandana |
hṛto'smyarthēna kauravyayuddhād anyat kim icchasi ||6.41.37||

Pollock (2006:225) translates the first line as "man is slave to power, but power is slave to no one."

Now, Bhīṣma utters these words after Yudhiṣṭhira has explained the reasons for fighting against him, and seeks his blessings to vanquish him. Bhīṣma recognizes the necessity and propriety of Yudhiṣṭhira's fight and gives his blessing. In doing so, he explains his commitment to Duryodhana alluding to his prior oath to the throne. In that context (or indeed even in a general context), translating *artha* as power seems rather odd. Especially because Bhīṣma says "*hṛtō'smi arthena,*" which may be translated as "I am compelled by *artha.*" Bhīṣma was not compelled by political power to act - but Bhīṣma's own earlier commitment. Or, arguably it could be translated as wealth, in the sense that Bhīṣma earned his livelihood (though this does seem to be a rather weak and excessively literal translation). In short, Pollock seems to use a line from the *Mahābhārata* and attributes a meaning that is textually and contextually difficult to sustain.

This is of course, not to deny that there is a political dimension to the central conflict depicted in the *Mahābhārata*, or in the ancient or medieval Indian kingdoms (or for that matter in modern India). The connection to Sanskrit is not clear, especially when it is justified by questionable translations.

Another aspect of the political dimension described is the support for recitation and propagation of *the Mahābhārata* provided by rulers across the country. The Pollock (2006) itself describes the *Mahābhārata* as "a veritable library of the world" because of its impact and content (Pollock 2006:225). So it would seem natural for rulers to promote such story telling (and perhaps encouraging story tellers in their kingdom to add their stories to the library). Further, the *Rāmāyaṇa* has also seen several variations - so much so that some of the South-east Asian versions diverge significantly from Vālmīki's version.

In other words, this version of the cosmopolis seems to have little or no similarities in the political sense with its existing usage. I am not suggesting that Pollock (2006) attempts to use cosmopolitan in its usual sense when applied to Sanskrit, but it would be more helpful to use words which do not require an elaborate justification of why the usual meaning is not the intended meaning for a given term. Incidentally, Hastināpura is translated as the "City of Elephants" (Pollock 2006:362). Sources such as the *Śabdakalpadruma* explain the word (using an *aluk-samāsa*) as a city founded by Hastin, a king of the Candravaṁśa lineage.

Next, let us consider the third aspect of Sanskrit cosmopolis in Pollock (2006) - the role of Sanskrit. Having already described the tools of power ascribed to Sanskrit, this aspect is perhaps discussed in relation to vernacular languages, and Sanskrit's interaction with them. I shall pick Kannada as an example because Kannada is discussed more extensively compared to other languages in Pollock (2006). The earliest writing in Kannada is available from the 5th c. CE. The first works of *kāvya* in Kannada appear almost five centuries later with Pampa who is called the *ādikavi* in Kannada. In the intervening five centuries, literature was confined to Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramśa. This, it is argued, was because Sanskrit asserted its power and suppressed literature in vernaculars.

Later, when Sanskrit "cedes literary power to vernaculars", it provides the framework for not just literary creativity, but also provides the basic structure for Kannada grammar (*vibhakti-s*, etc.). And the two languages shared a two-way exchange.

Quoting Nāgavarma (Pollock 2006:370), he translates the passage as "...metrical species [of Kannada and other vernaculars] have arisen from the three languages Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsha, and from the half language Paishachi." Attributing the correct analysis of this passage to TV Venkatachala Sastry, Pollock says that it has long been misunderstood. From a plain reading of the phrase "*sarva-viṣaya-bhāṣā-jātigaḷu*," a translation of "metrical species" seems worthy of discussion.

While he admits the *tatsama-tadbhava* relationship between Sanskrit and Kannada, it seeks to portray a much more strident break between the two languages in the emergence of Kannada literature. To that end, borrowing "metrical species" born from Sanskrit counterparts allows for a dramatic break which the older translation in which "languages born" from the three and a half languages, do not. The self-conscious note with which Kannada creates its own position is then further explained using the examples of *Kavirājamārga* and *Śabdamaṇidarpaṇa* (SMD). Here the self-aggrandizing statement of the SMD is treated seriously, just as *praśasti* statements are.

Further, Sanskrit's power in Vijayanagara is extolled. Though Kannada and Telugu were used extensively for administrative purposes (in their respective areas of usage), Pollock (2006) says that the Vijayanagara kings promoted Sanskrit literature and not Kannada literature. Now it is true, many works of Sanskrit were produced in that period - no less than the *Sāyaṇabhāṣya* of the Vedas themselves. But Kannada literary works seem to be ignored (Desai 1936) - e.g., Timmanna's *Kṛṣṇarāya Bhāratakathāmañjarī* (which is considered a landmark work of Kannada pride), Vīraśaiva poets Mallaṇṇārya (*Vīraśaivapurāṇa*), Virūparāja (*Tribhuvanatilaka*), Nanjarāju (*Kumāravyāsana kathe*).

Sanskrit is thus presented as the dominant power in the cosmopolis, the power which stifled literary production in vernacular languages.

4 The Death of Sanskrit

Finally, I shall briefly summarize Pollock's theory of the death of Sanskrit under five main points:

1. Sanskrit's death in Kashmir
2. Its steady decline in Vijayanagara kingdom
3. The last Sanskrit poet
4. Death before colonialism, not because of it.
5. All of useful knowledge in Sanskrit was because of the West anyway.

In Kashmir, it is said that Sanskrit effectively died in the 12th c. CE, and failed to find a strong voice again, despite the efforts of Zain-ul-'abidin in the 15th c. CE. The possible influence of Islamic invasions is not considered seriously. However, the historical account in Thapar's book tells a different story where Mahmud Ghazni is described as the "champion iconoclast looted the richest temples at an unprecedented scale" (Thapar 2015:427). Mahmud Ghuri followed in his footsteps in the 12th c. CE not to plunder, but to establish a potential kingdom.

Pollock (2006) briefly mentions the possible influence and accepts a southward shift in reaction to Islam development in the north. However, even if Islam rulers occupied power (the word invaders is not used in Pollock (2006) in this context), Pollock (2006) does not expect any adverse impact on traditional Sanskrit pundits. The strong learning tradition it is argued, should have persisted in literary endeavors.

In the case of Vijayanagara, Pollock (2006) and Pollock (2001) do not consider any Sanskrit works of this era to be original work, but merely reproductive in nature. Moreover, "the Vijayanagara cultural world seems to have produced few if any Sanskrit works" that transcended time or geography (Pollock 2001:401). Here the discussion seems a bit unclear. First, it is said that a large body of Vijayanagara literature is yet to see the light of day - because they are available only in unpublished manuscripts. Pollock (2006) echoes a wish for a change in this state of affairs and the publication of manuscripts. At the same time, Pollock (2001) asserts that Vijayanagara has not produced Sanskrit works that have stood the test of time. As a means of substantiating this line of reasoning, examples of Kannada and Telugu manuscripts that have survived since their creation during the Vijayanagara period are given. In the absence of a record of similar manuscripts in Sanskrit, it is said that literary production of Sanskrit during the Vijayanagara period was not especially impactful. The main thrust of the argument relies on three factors: availability, publishing and subjective assessment of manuscripts.

The first two factors of availability and publishing of manuscripts are somewhat related. Without a full catalogue and publication of manuscripts, it is difficult to assess the validity of the argument. More publication, research and writing regarding works of this period would help to better understand the contributions of Vijayanagara. Sadly, this field of study seems to have been a victim of modern day Indian politics. On the third factor regarding the subjective assessment of quality and whether works are primarily derivative, it perhaps merits a larger discussion. Hanneder's review discusses the shortcomings of relying excessively on qualitative assessment to decide the status of language vibrancy.

Kṛṣṇadēvarāya's *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya* is discussed as an example of a Vijayanagara work with limited literary value (Pollock 2001:402-403). After briefly describing the premise of the work, Pollock (2001) dismissively insists that the dramatic adaptation of the tale contains "nothing new". The tale is then seen through a politico-military perspective by relating the work to the king's Orissa campaign. As in the case of earlier kings who used Sanskrit to assert their power (Section 2), Kṛṣṇadēvarāya's work too is recognized for its "mytho-political representation" of the king.

At this stage, Pollock (2001) turns to the lack of personal experience reflected in Sanskrit works from the Vijayanagara period as a sign of Sanskrit's decline. Hanneder calls out the shifting of goalposts as "a surprising statement produced by the necessities of argumentation, rather than through evidence". The notion of personal experience as a poetic tool is further elaborated by Pollock in his discussion of Jagannātha.

According to Pollock (2001), the last Sanskrit poet was Jagannātha of the 17th c. CE. The reasons stated for this are as follows. He was the last great poet to travel the length and breadth of India. His was the last great work that found transregional acceptance. His *praśasti* of the kings of Udaipur and Delhi, though rooted in the literature's historical past, had a certain newness to it. The form of newness attributed to Jagannātha in this regard is not clearly described in Pollock (2006). Finally, his own personal life story finds resonance in his works. And the interest in his life story is enhanced because of the romantic love (and agony) he found in a Muslim woman. With his death, original Sanskrit literature of any appreciable value, in Pollock's estimation, died.

The death of Sanskrit was despite the Mughals' attempt at sustaining it. Examples of Akbar's court are offered as examples of a deliberate attempt at nurturing Sanskrit knowledge production. Sanskrit learning and schools, it is said, continued well into colonial rule. And the British Raj records show the proliferation of schools in the 19th c. CE. Yet despite this, Sanskrit literary production had ceased long before. Despite the continued presence of an informed readership which was well-versed in vernaculars and Sanskrit, 17th c. CE saw the death of Sanskrit.

Interestingly - and this aspect is not discussed in Pollock (2006) or Pollock (2001) - 17th c. CE saw the disappearance of the Kerala school of mathematics too. Starting with Mādhava (14th c. CE), a school of mathematics which made path-breaking contributions ends in 17th c. CE.

Finally, as Pollock (2006) says, "Westernization is a permanent and global phenomenon." A long list of items are offered as example of forms of knowledge or practice that India borrowed from the West - astronomy from the Greeks, Ashoka's "very idiom of rule" from Achaemenid Persia, architecture from Vetruvius, even *Rāmāyaṇa* could arguably come from Homerian source (Pollock 2006:265). (On *Rāmāyaṇa*, Pollock (2006) does not offer a conclusive statement, but states that *Rāmāyaṇa* possible origin in the Greek tales is a question worthy of consideration). Now, this idea of Western origin of all Indian or Sanskrit knowledge is made in the context of denying indigenism. It is argued that one can make a similar case for Easternization, in the sense that Greek's influence on Europe would count as Easternization of Europe. A constant exchange of ideas and knowledge is the crucial element. The implication is that even if Sanskrit died, it is not something that should especially concern Indians.

This denial of any indigenous knowledge, while extolling the virtues of constant contact and exchange of ideas, is perhaps best seen in the following context. First, a long list of items are presented as contributions of the West, unlike other regions or cultures. Even if geographically accurate, it strains credibility to think of Greece as the East in the context of knowledge creation and transmission. Second, mathematics, grammar or other forms of knowledge which were far more advanced in India than their western counterparts, do not find mention in this supposed equivalence in knowledge. Third, Pollock (2006) quotes extensively from Hegel. It is not difficult to see Hegel's ideas resonating in Pollock (2006) and other Pollock's writings on aesthetics (not discussed here). Hegel considered the "chief defect" of ancient Indians was that "they cannot grasp either the meanings themselves in their clarity, or existing reality in its own proper shape and significance." This idea is further expanded in denying any possibility of Indian knowledge in Pollock (2006) and elsewhere.

Moreover Hegel thinks the Indians "refer each and everything back to the sheerly Absolute and Divine, and to contemplate in the commonest and most sensuous things a fancifully created presence and actuality of Gods" (Pollock 2006:352-3).

Thus, Pollock (2006) argues that a series of important events occurred in geographically distinct areas such as Kashmir and Vijayanagara, which led to the death of Sanskrit across the country, despite the attempts of Muslim kings of Kashmir and the Mughals in preventing it. In 17th c. CE, with the last Sanskrit poet Jagannātha, Sanskrit's death was sealed.

5 Conclusion

The theory of birth, growth and death of Sanskrit is certainly interesting to any student of Sanskrit. In this paper, Pollock's hypothesis of the role of languages – particularly, Sanskrit and Kannada – in building and sustaining political power are described. Per Pollock, Sanskrit's linguistic, literary, grammatical and analytical maturity in ancient India became a source of power for kings who exploited it for their political gain. Having recognized its ability to accrue power, they nurtured Sanskrit literary production. This gave rise to a new literary form of *kāvya*. The Sanskrit poets returned the favor by composing *praśasti*, a new form of literature to praise the power of kings. This mutually beneficial ecosystem was disrupted by the rise of vernacular languages. Some vernacular languages such as Kannada then followed a similar pattern of royal patronage and power accrual using Kannada. Gradually literary production in Sanskrit declined despite efforts by Muslim rulers and later by British colonialists to revive it.

Throughout the process, Pollock employs three main techniques to form the hypothesis:

1. Selective data sampling: As shown in Section 2.4 and in Hanneder(2002), empirical data is selectively employed to suit the narrative, rather than let a comprehensive analysis of data guide the formation of the narrative. Hanneder uses the term "necessities of argumentation" to describe this characteristic. In my opinion, the selectivity has a stronger purpose. It not

only serves the purpose of supporting a particular argument, but forms the basis of forming the narrative itself.

2. Jargonization: Terms such as literization and literarization are described in detail. Creating new terms to describe certain phenomena is certainly important. Contextual discussion however is often lacking. Understanding whether a term which has a clear utility in the European context continues to have a clear connotation in the Indian context would help in better appreciating the hypothesis.
3. Re-interpretive analogy-making: Terms and historical events which may have a superficial resemblance (if any), are identified by fully stating caveats about their limited sense of similarity. The ensuing discussion however, quickly sacrifices the stated caveats in favor of building a narrative.

Finally, it hardly needs re-emphasis that Pollock's ideas merit serious discussion. It is unfortunate that the papers have not been addressed in similar depth or breadth. I shall conclude with some thoughts on the nature of future work that may add greater clarity to the questions raised in Pollock's papers. A tempting form of response may be comprised of two forms: (a) a careful and detailed discussion and rebuttal of the points raised in Pollock's writings, and (b) building a different, well-justified narrative that can explain the observed facts over the years.

But this response may face similar challenges and shortcomings. Instead, the field may benefit by taking a more systematic, data-driven approach in first building up a large dataset of literature, their themes and cross-dependencies and strive to build detailed, quantified analysis of the questions of interest. Creation of such a dataset could be carried out through a joint effort, and by developing automated techniques to check for biases in the data annotation. Then questions such as birth, growth, influence and death can be posed and analyzed more definitively.

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Chapter 5

Sanskrit is Not Dead

– *Satyanarayana Dasa*

Introduction

> "Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language in a state of quasi-animation, but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead... Sanskrit literature could hardly be said to be alive if it had ceased to function as the vehicle for living thought, thought that supplemented and not simply duplicated reality" (Pollock 2001:393,414).

Sheldon Pollock's 2001 argument of Sanskrit's decline is a justifiable one, but he has overstated the case by equating this decrease in production to the death of the language. He has similarly overextended the case in asserting that Sanskrit is no longer a medium for living thought. Through a case study of the Vraja region, with a special focus on the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, we analyze in this paper the significant literary contributions to novel thought expressed in Sanskrit in the 16-17th centuries CE. We further show Sanskrit in Vraja, and within the Gauḍīya tradition, has possessed historical continuity and vitality since the 16th century, and is thus not dead.

In our *pūrva-pakṣa*, we engage with the five primary arguments of Pollock's Introduction before he launches into his four case studies. First, we argue that language cannot be divorced from its socio-political context, so whether or not Sanskrit is being deployed as a political instrument is not germane to the vitality of the language. Second, Pollock makes bold assertions about the elementary level Sanskrit education, but he does not define the terms of his rhetoric, provide statistical evidence, nor any references for his claims. Third, in referencing the first six Sanskrit awards from the Sahitya Akademi, Pollock argues Sanskrit's contemporary literary potency is near extinction; we contend that while not a star performer amongst Indian languages, Sanskrit is performing adequately. Fourth, Pollock claims Sanskrit literature experienced a "momentous rupture" after a vibrant period from 1550-1750, but we point to the statistics of Sanskrit authors and literary works indicating this assertion as overstated. Finally, we analyze some of the problems of Pollock's vague terminology to raise doubts about his conclusion that Sanskrit is dead. An important consequence of more clearly defining language death, using Pollock's own metrics, allows us to think of living language as a vehicle of novel thought and imagination.

Our case study begins by applying a popular Sanskrit maxim from Nyāya to suggest that existence of particulars point to the existence of universals—a method to show that if Sanskrit is not dead in Vraja or the Gauḍīya tradition, more specifically, then it can be inferred that Sanskrit is not dead. The crux of our paper then focuses on what Pollock claims to be a gap in the intellectual history of Sanskrit from the 16-18th century, in order to prove that Sanskrit literature in Vraja was making history, demonstrating vitality, and producing novel—dare we say radical—thought. We specifically reference the new ideas and associated literary production of the Gosvāmin-s of Vrindāvan, with some additional attention to a selection of their contemporaries and successors. Our focus then shifts to contemporary Sanskrit education and ritual performance in Vraja. These mediums intersect through the innovated ritual of Bhāgavata kathā, (stories from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), a driver of cultural animation and social imagination. Finally, we examine Gauḍīya Sanskrit literary production since 1800 by identifying a selection of major scholars and their works. We conclude that there is sufficient doubt in Pollock's argument – in order to refute his claim that Sanskrit is dead.

Pūrva-pakṣa

Political Context

Pollock opens his paper by locating Sanskrit in the Indian political climate since the 1990s, stating that Sanskrit is central to the rhetoric of the contemporary Indian political right, specifically the BJP and VHP. He refers to political propaganda citing Sanskrit's role as a "source and preserver of world culture" and the evidence for Sanskrit's 4000-5000 year existence to be the seals from the Indus Valley civilization (Pollock 2001:392). We are not endorsing nor defending these claims. We suggest that since language cannot be separated from its socio-political context, the potential politicization of a language is perhaps an expected outcome, and thus, not necessarily discrediting the merits of the language's utility and relevance (Mufwene 2004:206). Regardless of the degree to which one agrees with the argument that Sanskrit is being deployed as an instrument of Hindu identity politics, Pollock's suggestion that Sanskrit's relevance is limited to this sphere—as rhetorical political currency— is overreaching.

Education

In summarizing Sanskrit's role in independent India, Pollock suggests "disparities in political inputs and cultural outcomes could be detailed across the board" (Pollock 2001:393). However, the two examples he utilizes to make his case do not have much support. First, he addresses Sanskrit's status as an official language of India and its associated funding benefits, specifically at colleges and universities. Yet in the discussion of the original fifteen, now eighteen, official languages of democratic India, Pollock seems to be suggesting Sanskrit's inclusion is based largely on statecraft rather than merit. He curiously propounds this view without any references or statistics: "with few exceptions, however, the Sanskrit pedagogy and scholarship at these institutions have shown a precipitous decline from pre-Independence quality and standards, almost in inverse proportion to the amount of funding they receive." (Pollock 2001:392)

Pollock neglects to define the metrics he has deployed for all of the categories supporting this unsubstantiated assertion: pedagogy, scholarship, quality, and standards. He neither provides further qualitative explanation to the difference between the pre-Independence and post-Independence context. However, perhaps most problematic is the absence of funding data to support his assertion of an inverse relationship between input and output. There is an additional curiosity in Pollock's claim: to which time period exactly does "pre-Independence" refer? Pollock claims that Sanskrit's pre-modern decline was so significant that "by 1800, the capacity of Sanskrit thought to make history had vanished" (Pollock 2001:394). He also quotes the Gujarati poet, Dalpatrām Dahyabhai, who in 1857 indicated that Sanskrit was dead (Pollock 2001:394). So if Sanskrit was already dead or nearly dead for more than a century before India's Independence, how could it have shown a "precipitous" decline in the 70 years since? There would have been no cliff from which to fall.

Contemporary Literary Recognition

In the second example, Pollock suggests Sanskrit's similarly poor performance in the domain of literature through the context of historical awards granted by the Sahitya Akademi ("The National Academy of Letters") in comparison to the other twenty-one recognized languages. He indicates the first five recipients "were given for works in English or Hindi on Sanskrit culture" and suggests the sixth Sanskrit award was based on an "almost metaliterary genre entirely unintelligible without specialized training" (Pollock 2001:392-3). The conclusions one can draw from analyzing six awards are likely more limited than Pollock suggests. The Akademi itself concedes that in its mission "to promote the unity of Indian literature" its annual awards across the board– not merely in Sanskrit– have "frequently been the butt of controversy" (Gokak 1985:11-12).

An analysis of the number of total awards by language in the first thirty years of the Sahitya Akademi, that is, in the years prior to 1984 and rising BJP influence, shows that Sanskrit performed just below the median. Thirteen languages surpassed Sanskrit, with Hindi leading the way (Rao 1985:194-210). Sanskrit equalled or exceeded the total awards of eight other languages, including English, with fifteen total awards (Rao 1985:194-210)[1]. This may be instructive considering– as of 1961— "translations, anthologies, abridgements and edited or annotated works are not eligible for Award"; one perhaps could have wrongly assumed Sanskrit awards were largely limited to translations (Gokak 1985:21, Rao 1985:50).

Additionally, a Sanskrit work was the recipient of the prestigious Jnanpith award in 2006 (Shoba 2009). The Jnanpith Award is arguably the most prestigious literary award in India and is presented annually to the single most outstanding Indian work or writer in a contemporary context (Jnanpith Award). The award is presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith Trust, but award selection is the responsibility of an independent selection board. To date, works in fifteen different languages have received the Jnanpith Award (Jnanpith Laureates). Based on the metric of literary achievement proposed by Pollock, Sanskrit is performing within the top two thirds of Indian official languages and hence possesses a moderate degree of language vitality in this context. If Sanskrit were in fact dead, it likely would not be winning awards at this level and frequency.

Literary Production into Modernity

Pollock indicates the period of 1550-1750 "constitutes one of the most innovative epochs of Sanskrit systematic thought", and our case study of Vraja which follows supports this claim (2001:393). However, he suggests this literary vitality was halted by a "momentous rupture" to such a degree "that by 1800, the capacity of Sanskrit thought to make history had vanished" (2001:394). Pollock does not attempt to explain the reasons for this radical shift though he acknowledges it is an important question with significant consequences across intellectual disciplines.

An analysis of Karl H. Potter's first volume of the *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy* seems to dispute Pollock's claim regarding the rapid decline of Sanskrit literary production by 1800, in terms of quantity of unique Sanskrit authors and works. Potter's bibliography contains lists of authors and their works related to Indian schools of philosophy, divided into two headings. The first heading is "Primary Texts and Literature About Them or Their Authors", and the second is "Literature about the Philosophical Systems and Indian Philosophy in General". The first heading is divided into three parts: Part I – Listed by author's dates, Part II – Known author but unknown text date (DU), and Part III – Author is unknown and text date is unknown (ADU). Part I is further subdivided into four subcategories; (a) BCE– 4th c., (b) 5th

c. – 9th c., (c) 10th c. - 14th c., (d) 15th c.– Present. We have analyzed Part I, the list of authors whose works and dates are known.

The results of our analysis do not support Pollock's assertion. The number of unique Sanskrit authors has actually increased over the centuries in question. The number of authors listed between 1601CE-1700CE is 108, between 1701CE– 1800CE is 183, between 1801CE - 1900CE is 185, and between 1901CE-2000CE is 391 (Potter 1995:594-785). We see a 69% increase in unique authors from the 17th to 18th century and what could be considered a growth explosion from the 19th to 20th century with a 111% increase in unique authorship.

The total Sanskrit works listed between 1601CE– 1700CE is 1225, between 1701CE– 1800CE is 775, between 1801CE– 1900CE is 585, and between 1901CE– 2000CE is 695 (Potter 1995:594-785). The total number of Sanskrit publications did decline during the 18th century but a 37% decline from the highly productive previous century can hardly be considered a "momentous rupture". As one of "the most innovative epochs of Sanskrit systematic thought" extended into the middle of the 18th century, it is not surprising that production dropped by nearly 25% in the nineteenth century. If Sanskrit were in such a death spiral, one would expect a decrease in production in the 20th century. But instead, we see a 19% increase. And, perhaps even more noteworthy, 20th century production is 90% of that of the eighteenth century, fifty years of which represented a golden period of production.

Rather than a perpetual decline towards extinction, the data seems to suggest a stabilization of Sanskrit production after an exceptionally robust 17th century. It is, however, possible that one could contend a rupture occurred between the 17th and 18th centuries, in terms of the ratio of works produced by each unique author, due to its 63% decline. The total works produced by author is 11.34 from 1601CE-1700CE, 4.23 from 1701-1800CE, 3.16 from 1801CE-1900CE, and 1.78 between 1901CE-2000CE. However, a seemingly stronger argument would emphasize the extraordinary level of production of Sanskrit authors during the 17th century, totaling over eleven works per author! This level of production is uncanny in the context of the modern and post-modern eras. The production of two to four works per author, in the 18th through 20th centuries, is not an output indicative of a dead language. While the social impact of the literary work during these periods is not necessarily directly proportional to production, it is difficult to support Pollock's argument of a "momentous rupture" to the point of death in light of the data presented above.

Terms

Pollock claims that "most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead" (2001:393). In order to respond to his bold assertion, it is important to define the two important categories Pollock introduces, particularly because he does not define them himself: *who are the observers in agreement and how do we define language death*? In analyzing the vague category of "most observers", is Pollock referring to himself and his colleagues of South Asian Studies in the United States and perhaps Western Europe? Or Indian scholars? Or trans-continental scholastic consensus? Or is Pollock referring to popular opinion? And if so, popular opinion in the United States, or India, or South Asia, or the global population at large? Or someone else altogether? The vagueness of this characterization of "most observers" is problematic.

While Pollock's individual position on the matter seems clear enough and his stature and achievement in the Western academy is well noted, one could, perhaps, infer that his is the commonly held perspective amongst his peers. However, short of significant corroborating scholarship, we hesitate to draw such a conclusion. Amongst Indian scholars, however, many observers would not agree with Pollock's assertion. For example, hundreds of scholars are actively engaged in regular dialogue concerning Sanskrit language through the well known forum of Sanskrit scholars, known as Bhāratīya Vidvat Pariṣat. Through the forum, there are daily questions and interactions amongst scholars concerning Sanskrit literary verse interpretations and references, amongst other topics. Most of the scholars on Bhāratīya Vidvat Pariṣat are Indian or of Indian origin. This level of engagement and collaboration suggests Sanskrit is not dead amongst this audience.

The activities of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies also suggests a level of scholastic engagement. The professional association has consistently held World Sanskrit Conferences every three years since its inauguration in 1972. The 16th Conference, hosted in Bangkok, Thailand, was organized into twenty-one fields where scholars presented papers followed by discussions (Sharma 2015:2). The distinct fields included: "Veda and Vedic Literature, Epics, Purāṇas, Āgama and Tantra, Linguistics, Grammar, Poetry, Drama and Aesthetics, Buddhist and Jaina Studies, Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, History of Religions and Ritual Studies, Sanskrit in Southeast Asia, Philosophy, History, Art and Architecture, Epigraphy, Sanskrit in Relation with Regional Languages and Literatures, Sanskrit, Science and Scientific Literature, Sanskrit Pedagogy and Contemporary Sanskrit Writing, Sanskrit in the IT World, Yoga and Āyurveda, Sūtra, Smṛti and Śāstra, and Manuscriptology" (Sharma 2015:2). In addition to the considerable breadth of topics which may indicate a certain level of vitality within the Sanskrit medium, the field titled *Sanskrit Pedagogy and Contemporary Sanskrit Writing* seems to further suggest that Sanskrit is not dead.

There does not seem to be trans-continental scholastic agreement that Sanskrit is dead. Even if the unproven and hypothetical inference of agreement amongst Western scholars were in fact substantiated, the use of the unquantified "most" raises concerns in the light of the above.

Based on Pollock's domain as a distinguished professor of pre-modern South Asia and the academic context of his extensive scholarship over several decades, it is unlikely he is referring to popular opinion in citing "most observers". However, in the unlikely event that he is referring to a popular consensus, we don't have any data to confirm this potential hypothesis one way or the other, what to speak of the merits of such a potential endeavor. Therefore, Pollock's term "most observers" is highly problematic from multiple vantage points, which may suggest why he didn't provide more specificity in defining the category.

While Pollock utilizes the term "dead" to refer to Sanskrit, he does so in a normative way, recognizing that the "metaphor is misleading, suggesting biologistic or evolutionary beliefs about cultural change that are deeply flawed" (Pollock 2001:393). He further problematizes the category in suggesting that some may argue that "all written languages are learned and learnèd, and therefore in some sense frozen in time ("dead")" (2001:393). Pollock's nuanced framing of language death is useful in avoiding the potential liabilities he suggests, but it also leaves us without a clear picture of what exactly he means in pronouncing "Sanskrit is dead". The strongest indication Pollock provides for a definition of language death is being "frozen in time", which he uses specifically as a synonym.

A robust engagement with linguistic theory is beyond the scope of this paper, but we do think it useful to offer a clear definition, without necessarily committing to its corollaries surrounding biological or cultural change. Salikoko Mufwene, Professor of Linguistics at University of Chicago, states, "language death is likewise a protracted change of state used to describe community level loss of competence in a language, it denotes a process that does not affect all speakers at the same time nor to the same extent. Under one conception of the process, it has to do with the statistical assessment of the maintenance versus loss of competence in a language variety among its speakers. Total death is declared when there are no speakers left of a particular language variety in a population that had used it" (2004:204).

By Mufwene's definition, no one would argue that Sanskrit has experienced a "total death" as the 2001 Indian census refers to over 14,000 Sanskrit speakers and Pollock references "Sanskrit periodicals and journals, feature films and daily newscasts on All India Radio, school plays" (Pollock 2001:393; 2001 India Census). The more useful definition offered by Mufwene for our purpose relates to loss of language competence. Of course, without a fixed degree of "community level loss of competence in a language" offered in the definition of language death, there can be a wide range of interpretation.

In assessing whether or not Sanskrit is dead, we have a preliminary working definition coupling Pollock's frozen in time and Mufwene's loss of community language competence. Pollock adds some critical qualification in conceptualizing language and communication. He states, "the communication of new imagination, for example, is hardly less valuable in itself than the communication of new information. In fact, a language's capacity to function as a vehicle for such imagination is one crucial measure of its social energy" (2001:394). Pollock clarifies that language vitality is not limited to the transmission of new information, but includes the impact of communicated information in the form of new imagination or experience. His use of the modifier "crucial" may be informative as it was initially used to describe

"Sanskrit is dead, in some crucial way", but here points to the impact of language-inspired imagination (2001:393).

Therefore, our conclusion in determining if Sanskrit is dead will utilize Pollock's own metric which places equal value on the communication of new information and imagination through a broader context of community language competence. Through our Vraja case study with special attention on the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition, we will demonstrate that Sanskrit has retained continuity as an expression of living thought and imagination. The Vraja experience casts significant doubts on Pollock's claim that "Sanskrit is dead".

Vraja Case Study

Pollock utilizes four cases from different periods and geographies to illustrate his conclusion that Sanskrit is dead. We will not analyze these individual cases, but instead offer an alternative case study showing the continuity of Sanskrit vitality and literary production in the Vraja region, with special attention on the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition. We will further demonstrate that these literary contributions are novel in content. In refutation of Pollock's claim that Sanskrit is dead or was "stillborn", we use the popular Sanskrit maxim of the "rice in the cooking-pot", *sthāli-pulāka nyāya*. According to Colonel G. A. Jacob, the maxim means, "In a cooking-pot all the grains are equally moistened by the heated water, such that when one grain is found to be well cooked, the same may be inferred with regard to the other grains. So the maxim is used when the condition of the whole class is inferred from that of a part" (Jacob 1900:40). In the present study, the grain is analogized to the life of Sanskrit in the Vraja area and the cooking-pot is equated to the whole country of India. In Vraja, we primarily focus on the vibrant life of Sanskrit related to the school of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, which had its inception in the first quarter of the sixteenth century and continues to flourish in the present day. If it is proven that Sanskrit was alive and continues to be so in Vraja, then one can infer, using the above-mentioned maxim, that it is also so in the rest of India.

Here one may object to the use of the cooking-pot example, because there is no such cultural uniformity in India that is analogous to the uniform condition of heat in the pot. It is partly true. But, if we recognize the fact that India's majority population accepts Hindu *dharma*, which is rooted primarily in Sanskrit literature and depends on it for its daily religious performance, then it can be compared to a big cooking pot of Hindu culture with different varieties of grains in it in the form of various Hindu traditions. Moreover, Vraja sustained a severe attack under the Moghul rule of Aurangzeb beginning in 1669, which had a considerable impact. Monika Horstmann describes, "Govindadevjī was removed from Vrindavan together with his consort and Vṛndādevī when Aurangzeb displayed an increasing intolerance towards the Hindus. The contemporary historian Sāqī Musta'idd Khān reported that on 8 April 1669, the Emperor had issued orders to demolish Hindu schools and temples and to restrain the practice of the Hindu religion" (Horstmann 1999:8)[2]. If Sanskrit could survive and flourish under these conditions, then there may be reason to believe it could perform better in Indian areas of relative peace. It is like testing the hardest grain in the cooking-pot. If the hardest grain is cooked, then the softer ones would surely be cooked (Miśra 1978:35)[3].

However, accepting the logic of case study particulars proving a universal concept could be — and arguably is — utilized by Pollock also. He also uses case studies in an attempt to prove Sanskrit's death. If all cases accurately portray their respective assertions, then we have a contradiction in conclusions: it would be unclear if pan-Indic Sanskrit is in fact dead or alive. Regardless, the ambiguity resulting from these rivaling conclusions raises considerable doubt to Pollock's claim that Sanskrit is dead[4].

Novel Literary Content

The Vraja case study is instructive in additional ways also. First, it contributes to the larger tapestry of understanding India's intellectual history between the 16th and 18th centuries, which history, Pollock has argued elsewhere, "remains to be written, since these [Sanskrit] texts have yet to be accessed, read, and analyzed" (Pollock 2005:78-79). Pollock's expresses concern about a gap in Indian intellectual history, "We have no clear understanding of whether, and if so, when, Sanskrit culture ceased to make history, whether, and if so, why, it proved incapable of preserving into the present the creative vitality it displayed in earlier epochs, and what this loss of effectivity might reveal about those factors within the wider world of society and polity that had kept it vital" (Pollock 2001:393). The Vraja case can play a small part in unraveling this larger and more complex question by showing that Sanskrit culture showed a historical continuity and vitality.

Second, it can point to the specific features of Sanskrit's blossoming in the 16th - 17th centuries. The Vraja case aligns with Pollock's assessment of this period as "one of the most innovative epochs of Sanskrit systematic thought" (2001:393). However, there is discord in the characterization of these novel developments. Sanskrit texts from this time period have received shallow analysis to date, thus requiring further research. But Pollock expresses that the initial indications that the period produced new literary styles but not new content will likely be substantiated. He states,

> the project and significance of the self-described 'new intellectuals' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also await detailed analysis, but some first impressions are likely to be sustained by further research. What these scholars produced was a newness of style without a newness of substance. No idiom was developed in which to articulate a new relationship to the past, let alone a critique; no new forms of knowledge—no new theory of religious identity, for example, let alone of the political—were produced in which the changed conditions of political and religious life could be conceptualized (Pollock 2001:417).

Our exposition of the Gauḍīya tradition will strongly refute the above mentioned "first impressions" which Pollock suggests are likely to be proven. We demonstrate that new, perhaps radically new, Sanskrit content emerged from this period. S.K De explains, "it was the inspiration and teaching of the six pious and scholarly Gosvāmin-s which came to determine finally the doctrinal trend of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism which, however modified and supplemented in later times, dominated throughout its subsequent history" (De 1986:118). These new Sanskrit texts produced from early Gauḍīya scholars were the foundation of a new religious tradition and identity.

> One of the most remarkable features of the Caitanya movement is its extraordinary literary activity, the power and vitality of its inspiration being evidenced by the vast literature which it produced both in the learned classical tongue and in the living language of the province. It enriched the field of Sanskrit scholarship by its more solid and laborious productions in theology, philosophy, ritualism, and Rasa-śāstra, so on

> the other, it poured itself out lavishly in song and story, almost creating as it did a new literary epoch
> (De 1986:556).

S.K. De highlights the new literary world created by the Gauḍīya tradition, which principally occurred in Sanskrit in the region of Vraja. Vraja consists of about 84 square miles making up the district of Mathura in the state of UP, parts of Faridabad district in the state of Haryana, and part of Bharatpur district in the state of Rajasthan. In the 16-17th centuries, it was exceptionally fertile ground for literary production and novel concepts, most specifically directed to the exposition of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. David Haberman (2003) describes,

> Other groups besides the Gauḍīyas were also actively involved in developing the region of Vraja as a new center of Kṛṣṇa worship: all these seem to have worked in an atmosphere of mutual influence. Vallabhācārya, a Tailang brāhmaṇa whose family came from what is now Andhra Pradesh, arrived in Vraja in the early years of sixteenth century, and there began what was to become the Puṣṭi Mārga, one of the most popular of the Vaiṣṇava lineages (sampradāya) centered in Vraja. Rūpa Gosvāmin refers to Vallabha's teachings directly in the Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhu. A local Vraja saint by the name of Hita Harivaṁśa established the Rādhāvallabha temple in Vṛndāvana in the year 1534, and composed (italics mine) passionate poems about the love-affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that still inspire members of a small but influential sampradāya known as the Rādhāvallabhīs. Another poet-saint who took residence in Vṛndāvana at this time was Svāmī Haridāsa, who established the temple image of Kuñjabihārī or Banke Bihārī. Svāmī Haridāsa is said to have been the teacher of Tansen, the legendary musician of Akabar's court. Although the Vaiṣṇava saint Nimbārka was most likely born in the thirteenth century, the sampradāya, he founded also played an active role in the establishment of the new form of worship in Vraja that focused on the love affair of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. Another key figure involved in the establishment of the new form of worship in Vraja is Mādhavendra Pūrī. It is not clear whether Mādhavendra Pūrī came from Bengal or from southern India, nonetheless all Vraja sources portray him as having a vital role in establishing the important Kṛṣṇa shrine on top of Mount Govardhana. The works of the creative leaders of the new religion centered in Vraja were then carried by others throughout northern India, thus insuring the lasting influence of the poetry, texts, and religious culture that were produced during the creative years of the early sixteenth century. For example, the works of Rūpa Gosvāmin were carried back to Bengal by such disciples as Narottama Dāsa Thākura and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and were incorporated into the widely popular

> Caitanya Caritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, thereby creating a wide popular and long-lasting audience. The Vaiṣṇava culture that began in Vraja in the sixteenth century is still vitally alive, and Vṛndāvana continues to be a major center for temple and pilgrimage activities today. The picture that emerges during the first half of the sixteenth century is an explosion of lively and imaginative activity initiated by various scholars, poets, and saints, and focused on Kṛṣṇa as the fully manifest form of ultimate reality in the guise of a passionate Vraja cowherd
>
> (Haberman 2003:xxxiv-xxxv).

This was a novel literary period in terms of both content and style, and one that encompassed a number of different genres. And while vernacular also contributed to this portrait, most of the scholars and poets mentioned by Haberman wrote primarily in Sanskrit, the only exception being Svāmī Haridāsa who wrote only in Braja-bhāṣā. Many different scholars and poets contributed to this literary explosion, but perhaps the greatest inspiration was drawn from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Sanskrit Literature of the Gauḍīya Gosvāmin-s: 16th Century

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the founder of the Gauḍīya (also referred to as Caitanya or Bengal) Vaiṣṇava school, was born at Navadvip, Bengal, in 1486 CE. He made his residence at Jagannath Puri, Orrisa, at the age of 24 after entering into the renounced order of life. From there he visited Vrindāvan in the fall of 1515 for about a month. After returning to Puri, he sent some of his erudite Bengali followers, headed by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, to settle in Vraja. They were assigned three main jobs: first, to discover the various places related to Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*-s or divine play; second, to establish temples of Kṛṣṇa worship; and third, to compose literary works delineating the path of devotion, *bhakti-yoga*, as taught by the Śrī Caitanya. Tony Stewart (2010) confirms the role of Gosvāmin-s, "they were more than religious archaeologists, they were scholars who had been deputed to gather and compose texts so they might better explain the religious devotion, *bhakti*, that Caitanya had revealed" (Stewart 2010:4). These followers took the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to heart and successfully fulfilled the instructions of their teacher. S.K De refers to the *Gosvāmin-s*, "it was indeed their eminence and influence which gave a marked primacy to the Bengal school over other rival schools in the holy city associated with the name of Kṛṣṇa"(De 1986:118). The scope of this paper will focus on the third instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: composing works delineating the path of Bhakti-yoga.

The principal followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu joining Sanātana and Rūpa in Vraja included their nephew Jīva, Raghunāth dāsa, Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa, and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. Popularly, they came to be known as the six Gosvāmin-s and their literary focus was novel in comparison to other Vaiṣṇava schools who focused on producing original commentaries of the *prasthāna trayī*. The Gosvāminns, and the Gauḍīya tradition which they shaped, instead focused on expositions inspired by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which they viewed as Vyāsa's natural commentary of the sūtra and the canonical text of their new tradition (SN Dasa 2015: Anu 19). This shift of canonical focus from the *prasthāna trayī* to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* was a radical one, which highlights the novelty of its corresponding literary outputs.

The Gosvāmin-s mainly wrote in Sanskrit, which may suggest the language's prominence at the time, rather than writing in the Braja-bhāṣā, the vernacular of Vraja, or in Bengali or Oriya[5]. While the definitive dates of their literary production is difficult to discern, "we can approximately fix the period of their literary activity" from the onset of the 16th century (De 1986:160)[6]. What is definitive is they produced an immense body of literature. Edward C. Dimock illustrates,

> "Rūpa and Sanātana, and their nephew Jīva, were brilliant men, learned in the *śāstras* and every conceivable category of learning from esthetics to grammar. Jīva was perhaps the most brilliant of all, and he has more than twenty Sanskrit works covering grammar, poetry, poetics, ritual, theology, and philosophy to his credit, including the monumental *ṣaṭ-sandarbha*, which is the first full treatment of the theology of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism" (Dimock 1999:24).

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin wrote six Sanskrit texts, the most noteworthy of which is the the *Śrī-bṛhad-bhāgavtāmṛtam*[7]. The text utilizes a Puranic narrative style and its principle theme is the theology of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. It is divided into two parts, the first of which charts the story of sage Nārada's quest to locate the greatest of Kṛṣṇa devotees, thereby facilitating an explanation of the characteristics of an ideal devotee and "the different stages of devotional attainment, ending in the Madhura or erotic attitude of the Gopī-s to Kṛṣṇa" (De 1986:235). A principal and novel theme of the Gauḍīya literary tradition is the representation of the Vraja cowherd girls (*gopī-s*) as the paradigmatic *bhakta-s*.

The second part of the text "reverses the process described in the first part" and focuses on "Kṛṣṇa's mode of manifesting himself to His Bhakta" (De 1986:235). Kṛṣṇa's reciprocation of love for his *bhakta-s* is another point of theological emphasis for the Gauḍīya tradition. The second part of Sanātana's Gosvāmin's text concludes that "Vṛndāvana is the real paradise of Kṛṣṇa where the unmanifest eternal sport of Kṛṣṇa becomes manifest to him alone who is blessed with real Bhakti for the deity" (De 1986:238). Sanātana thus establishes Vṛndāvana as the intersection between the phenomenal and noumenal worlds for the *bhakta*.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin was a more prolific writer than his brother and his literary work on *bhakti rasa*, as seen specifically in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (devotional poetics) and *Śrī-ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, are particularly noteworthy as they represented a novel genre through a fusion of Sanskrit poetics and *bhakti* sentiment[8]. S.K. De explains, "a new turn was thus given to the old Rasa theory of conventional Poetics but also to the religious emotion underlying older Vaiṣṇava faith" (De 1986:166). David Haberman expounds upon De's recognition of Rūpa's literary contributions of new ideas. He describes,

> "Rūpa's understanding of rasa differs greatly from those of other theoreticians who preceded him. Whereas previous writers normally restricted the rasa experience to the limited space of the theatre, he extended it to all of life. Rasa is now not understood to be simply a temporary aesthetic experience, but rather as the culminating core of genuine human life. ... Although Rūpa will proceed to introduce variety into love, it is clear that bhakti-rasa has a single and very special Foundational Emotion. For him, then, all genuine Rasa is based on some form of love, or more specifically, some form of love for Kṛṣṇa. This is a significant point of departure from previous bhakti theoreticians, such as Bhojadeva, who recognized the traditional nine Foundational Emotions"
>
> (Haberman 2003:li-lii).

More so than novel form, Rūpa Gosvāmin's literary production can be understood as novel literary content where "literary-erotic emotion transmuted into a deep and ineffable devotional sentiment, which is intensely personal and yet impersonalized into a mental condition of disinterested joy"(De 1986:169).

Despite the significant literary contributions of his uncles, Sanātana and Rūpa, Edward Dimock suggests, "Jīva may have been the most brilliant of all" the Gosvāmins due to the breadth and depth of his literary work (24). S.K. De seems to arrive at a similar conclusion: "Jīva became the highest court of appeal in doctrinal matters so long as he lived" (1986:150). Jīva's *magnum opus* is the Ṣaṭ Sandarbha, a six-part systematic analysis of the Gauḍīya school, which has been reified as the authoritative doctrine of the tradition[9]. The Sandarbhas quote heavily from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa in addition to drawing from the Upaniṣads and other Puranas, but it is "considerably original in its outlook and presentation...ideas and methods" (De 1986:256). The Sandarbhas represent perhaps the greatest novel literary achievement of the Gauḍīya tradition.

Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmin's most famous work is *Haribhakti-vilāsa*, which is an erudite and "authoritative exposition of most of the compulsory rites and ceremonies...that is now regarded to be the highest authority of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism" (De 1986:408-9)[10]. Consistent with the innovative nature of the Gauḍīya tradition, it largely departs from the orthodox Smṛti tradition and instead "evolves a Smṛti of its own" based on its own canonical scriptures and influences from Bengali Tantra (De 1986:409).

Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin's principal literary contribution is poetry titled, *Muktācaritam*[11]. The *Muktācaritam* is written in the Campū style combining prose and verse, and it focuses on Kṛṣṇa's Vraja līla-s. In reference to Kṛṣṇa, the text demonstrates "the superiority of his free love for Radhā over his wedded love for Satyabhāmā" (De 1986:123). The theme of prioritizing spontaneous love generated by the heart over that which is socially bound is a fundamental theme of the Gauḍīya tradition, and one of its novel literary and theological contributions.

Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa seems to have assisted the others in their literary works; no works are directly ascribed to him. He is most renowned for singing Bhagāvata Purāṇa in a vast range of different melodies.

Gosvāmin Contemporaries

As David Haberman clarified earlier, there were numerous exemplary personalities, who were Vraja contemporaries of the Gosvāmin-s, who wrote profusely in Sanskrit. Two of the most prominent examples include Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī and Śrī Nārayaṇa Bhaṭṭa. One of the most noteworthy works of Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī is *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, a devotional and poetic hagiography of Caitanya[12]. The text is novel in its Sanskrit presentation of Caitanya as an *avatāra*, specifically, an incarnation of both Kṛṣṇa and Radhā. While this particular conception of Caitanya's divinity does not seem to be explicitly endorsed by the Vraja Gosvāmin-s, it did have traction in the movement's Bengali literature and eventually came to be incorporated into the Gauḍīya doctrine. S.K. De describes *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, "the poem undoubtedly reflects what is called the Gaura-pāramya attitude of his Navadvīpa devotees, which is not explicit in the works of the Gosvāminns, but which regards Caitanya in himself, and not as an image of Kṛṣṇa, as the highest reality or Parama Tattva" (1986:130).

Śrī Nārayaṇa Bhaṭṭa was a prolific Sanskrit author who made several novel contributions of continuous impact on the social imagination of the the tradition[13]. He identified and explained the various holy places surrounding the twelve forests of Vraja, which became the basis for the one month Vraja parikrama (circumambulation) that remains a vibrant and popular annual ritual, drawing pilgrims from all parts of India. He also propagated the integration of *rāsa līlā* into Vraja dramas, which also are central to Vraja cultural life. Lastly, he founded the *Śrigi temple* in Rādha's town of *Varśana*, a primary pilgrimage site.

Gauḍīya Scholastics following the Gosvāmin-s: 17-18th Century

There were numerous scholars who wrote in Sanskrit in the immediate wake of the Gosvāmin-s, but we will focus on three of them: Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravarti, and Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa[14]. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja "is the only figure in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava history known to have studied with all six of the original Gosvāmin-s of Vṛndāvana" (Stewart 190). He wrote a *mahākāvya* (great poetry) about the daily activities of Kṛṣṇa and *gopī-s* in Vṛndāvana called *Śrī-govinda-līlāmṛtam*, but his most famous work is *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the sacred biography of Caitanya's life which has become canonized by the tradition[15]. While largely written in Bengali, the interspersion of Sanskrit is so prolific that Tārāpada Mukhyopadādhyāya contends "the 'real' *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* was this Sanskrit skeleton that was fleshed out by the Bengali text" (Stewart 243). Tony Stewart seems to endorse Mukhyopadādhyāya's argument that it is more accurate to define it as a "Sanskrit *sūtra* with Bengali commentary serving to unpack the terse statements" (246). Regardless, we can consider *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as a "mixed text" with its "three thousand verses of Sanskrit quotation embraced by nearly twenty thousand verses of Bengali— for it was the Sanskrit that structured the text" (Stewart 246, 21).

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravarti (17th Century) was one of the greatest scholars after the Gosvāmin-s of Vṛndāvana in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism[16]. He wrote voluminously in Sanskrit, including a commentary on *Bhagavad Gītā*. But Cakravarti is perhaps best known for his clear expositions on the writings of Rūpa Gosvāmin, specifically on *rāsa* theory. An additional important contribution was his resolution of the ambiguity concerning if the Vraja *gopī-s* were or were not married to Kṛṣṇa. The amorous, yet out of wedlock, relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopī-s* was (and is) a provocative concept, but one that is central to the Gauḍīya theology of *Rāgānugā bhakti*. Cakravarti's work was crucial to expanding and clarifying this controversial and relatively novel idea.

Like Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa (18th century) wrote in Sanskrit on almost all the branches of literary studies such as philosophy, poetics, rhetoric, dramaturgy, history, liturgy, and panegyrics[17]. But his greatest literary achievement was his original commentary on the *prasthāna-trayī*, Vedānta's canonical trilogy comprised of the Upaniṣad-s, Vedānta Sūtra-s, and the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In order for a *sampradāya* of the Vedānta to be officially recognized, it needs to prove its *siddhānta* through original commentary on the *prasthāna-trayī*. As the Gauḍīya literary tradition was novel to the point of radical innovation, its early scholastics did not prioritize this formality. However, following a controversy concerning worship of both Radhā and Kṛṣṇa at the Govindaji temple in Jaipur, Baladeva validated the tradition with his original Sanskrit commentaries of the *prasthāna-trayī* (Kapoor 1994:38). He was the first in the Gauḍīya tradition to comment on the Upaniṣad-s and *Vedānta Sūtras*.

Contemporary Sanskrit Education

Today Sanskrit education is abundant in Vraja and is transmitted in three primary ways: through government institutions, specifically universities, through private institutions, and through the traditional *guru-śiṣya* relationship. There are a considerable number of Sanskrit schools operating in Vraja and thirty of the most well-known schools can be found in Appendix C. In the institutional context, there are two primary levels following the completion of *uttara madhyamā*, the approximate equivalent of a high school degree. The Śastrī or Tīrtha degree is awarded after the successful completion of annual written and oral examinations over a three-year period. The Śastrī or Tīrtha degree is equivalent to a bachelor's degree. The Ācārya degree is equivalent to a master's degree and requires an additional two years of course work and annual examinations following the Śāstrī/Tīrtha degree. In terms of pedagogy, students of Sanskrit grammar typically memorize the sutras, notably those of Pāṇini. But grammar is not the only subject taught in Sanskrit, one can study a wide range of subjects including but not limited to: Sāhitya, Pūraṇa, Itihāsa, Jyautiśa, Vedas, Vedānta, etc. In addition to these formal educational institutions, there are hundreds of *āśrama-s* in Vṛndāvana where teachers— *guru-s* and *ācārya-s*— teach to their students/disciples in a traditional manner. While not as widely prevalent as the pre-modern era, this method of knowledge transmission still exists. By traditional manner, there is no formal school and admission. The interested student approaches a particular guru and studies under him. I personally studied in this manner in addition to completing a Sanskrit PhD degree from Agra University. Specifically, I studied the *Ṣaṭ Sandarbha* from Śri Haridāsa Śastrī Mahārāja and Nyāya from Śri Śyāmāśaraṇa Mahārāja. For a more current example, at Jīva Institute, there are four such teachers, including myself, who teach students on request. At present, I am teaching a six- month course in Sanskrit and *darśana-s* to about 50 students from different parts of the world. The traditional transmission of Sanskrit knowledge is still actively functioning.

Ritual Use of Sanskrit

Tony Stewart speaks of the adaptability and vitality of the Gauḍīya tradition, "each generation was charged with the responsibility of revalorizing its tradition without destroying it, to make it relevant to a contemporary world without having to diverge from the general consensus of its broad normative ideas" (9). As Sanskrit is deeply embedded within the foundation of the tradition, the language continues to play an indispensable role in its living transmission.

The continuity of Sanskrit education thus impacts the performance of rituals, where the use and understanding of the classical language is still considered vital. While these various rituals do not contribute to new literary production, they play critical roles as catalysts of cultural animation and novel production of social imagination. As Pollock himself underscores, "the communication of new imagination, for example, is hardly less valuable in itself than the communication of new information. In fact, a language's capacity to function as a vehicle for such imagination is one crucial measure of its social energy" (Pollock 2001:394). Sanskrit makes considerable contemporary contributions to cultural vitality through ritual.

Bhāgavata Vidyālaya-s are specialized schools where students exclusively study the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* with Sanskrit commentaries through a one-year course. Although the classes are taught in Hindi, basic Sanskrit grammar is a pre-requisite since the primary text is written in Sanskrit. These students are prepared to become professional speakers of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which is very popular in northern India. Performers of Bhāgavata kathā, as the recitation of the narrative is referred to, speak on portions of the text from memory over a period of seven days. Although the primary discourse in spoken in Hindi, it includes the recitation of an abundance of Sanskrit verses from the primary text. There are hundreds of Bhāgavata kathā performers coming through Vraja, and the most popular ones, such as Krishna Chandra Sastri, Mṛdula Krishna Sastri, Devakinānda Thakur, and Pundrik Gosvami, draw tens of thousands of participants to a single recitation. Kathā takes place all year round, and popular performers may deliver one or two performances per month.

Sometimes 108 or even 1008 reciters sit together and sing *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* collectively. Bhāgavata kathā, which is underpinned by and interspersed with Sanskrit, is one of the most popular and colorful forms of contemporary religious activity igniting social activity.

Not as publically oriented as Bhāgavata kathā, Hindu religious ceremonies called *saṁskāra-s* are recited in Sanskrit and continue to play an important role in family life. They are most commonly performed during rites of human passage such as birth, marriage, and death, but there are many more including the first tonsure of a baby, first eating of grains, beginning of education, etc. The first *saṁskāra* is ideally performed on the day the child is conceived and the last one is done after death. While the observation of *saṁskāra-s* varies and some Hindus do not observe them at all, they remain a relevant aspect of traditional cultural life in Vraja, and of contemporary India more generally.

The *saṁskāra-s* are performed under the guidance of a priest who is trained in ceremonial rituals and the recitation of Sanskrit *mantra-s*. Even if the priest is not a Sanskrit scholar, he must know basic rules of Sanskrit pronunciation. The priest may not even have gone to a Sanskrit school, but he would have learned the *mantra-s* from his father, or senior family member, or member of the community. Ceremonial knowledge has been preserved in India for centuries through this type of oral transmission.

An additional Vedic inspired ritual, though diminishing, is chanting of the Gāyatrī *mantra* at twilight time, twice per day. While historically applicable to the three *dvija varna-s*, it is primarily only applicable for *brāhmaṇa-s* in the present context for fulfillment of Hindu *dharma*. After receiving the sacred thread at the *yajñopavīta* ceremony, one is expected to perform the ceremony, called *sandhyā-vandana*, twice per day. The *mantra* is typically transmitted through a family lineage of *brāhmaṇa-s* and the particulars of ceremonial performance varies depending on the branch of the Veda in which the family tradition is rooted.

A more commonplace ritual and one that is inclusive of a wider audience is the regular chanting of Sanskrit *mantra*-s and *stotra*-s, prayers. There is significant variety of content, and *mantra-s* often reference Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā, or Ganeśa, though Kṛṣṇa is most prevalent in Vraja. Several common sources of chanting include: Vaidika Sūkta-s, Śānti-pāṭha, *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, *Durgā-saptaśatī*, *Śiva-mahimnas-stotra*, *Gajendra-stuti*, *Gopāla-sahasra-nāma*, *Rādhā-kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-stotra*, *Gopī-gīta*, prayers to one's *iṣṭadevatā* and guru.

Temples are abundant in Vraja, even in the smallest of the villages in rural areas. Vṛndāvan is a town of temples. There are approximately 5000 temples— some big and some small— in Vṛndāvan alone, and every temple has a deity. When a new temple is built, which is not uncommon, the deity is first installed through a ceremony called *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā* in order to prepare it to invoke divine presence in the deity. This is an elaborate process involving an abundance of Sanskrit mantra recitation. After the installation, the deity must be worshiped at least twice a day in order to maintain its divine presence. Thus every temple has at least one priest, *pūjāri* or an *arcaka*. The process of deity worship involves recitation of *mantra*-s and prayers called *stotra*-s, which are mostly in Sanskrit.

Lastly, Vṛndāvana has a class of priests, *paṇḍa*-s, who guide pilgrims and perform worship for them. On the pilgrim's behalf, a *paṇḍa* will recite Sanskrit *mantra*-s to deities or holy places, like the Yamuna river. The pilgrim is believed to receive the spiritual benefit performed by the *paṇḍa*, and the latter typically receives compensation for the services performed.

Gauḍīya Literary Tradition: 1800-Present

In discussing the Gauḍīya literary corpus, specifically that which relates to Sanskrit and vernacular biographies of Caitanya, Tony Stewart confirms "the enormity of this textual tradition" (2010:xi). Stewart highlights that the Gauḍīya tradition, like other textual traditions, "depend on what I call 'living texts' that are routinely modified to suit the immediate needs, rather than privileging some kind of original or Ur-text" (2010:xi). Stewart underscores the vitality inherent in these texts within their traditional context. They are by his definition "living" through the continuity of their popular engagement and scholarly revision. Because Sanskrit plays a central role in this living textual tradition, it is not dead.

The continuous role of Sanskrit in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* cannot be underestimated. Like many of the medieval *bhakti* movements, the use of the vernacular in various literary forms has ensured the spread of Krishna *bhakti* to all strata of society. However, the Gauḍīya-s have maintained an active commitment to Sanskrit engagement. In addition to the production of new texts, the fluid scholastic interpretation of the Sanskrit canon based on time, place, and circumstance catalyzes the creation of new imagination for devotees and defines the tradition as living. We will touch on several of these important contributions, with special attention on Kedaranath Datta Bhaktivinoda.

The 19th century saw the study of Sanskrit introduced in the Fort William school for British and East India Company bureaucrats as a necessity for understanding the new crown jewel of the British Empire. British scholars and researchers, along with their Indian counterparts, embarked on a search for manuscripts that had been lost or had never achieved wide fame. This development was of special interest to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava-s and by the end of the century, there were numerous efforts to find rare books and to bring them to publication. Perhaps the most important development was the publication of Rajendralal Mitra's (1824-1891) *Notices*, which lists hundreds of texts held in mostly private collections, many written by reputed authors. Rajendralal Mitra was one of the first modern Indologists of Indian origin, and his contribution triggered the publication of many literary works and the attention of the Vaiṣṇava community (Kapoor 2002:3527).

The Radharaman Press of Berhampore (Murshidabad), funded by Raja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Cossim Bazaar and edited by Rām Nārāyan Vidyaratna, published many of the books identified through *Notices* along with their Bengali translations, making them available to a wide audience for the first time. *Notices* identified a large number of commentaries that had been written by unknown authors; these filled an important role for understanding the original texts, which often had no earlier commentaries.

The availability of books in printed form also led to the writing of new commentaries or inspired new compositions. Take for example Vīracandra Gosvāmin's commentary on the *Gopāla-campū*, or that of Vaṁśīdhara on the *Bhāgavatam (Bhāvārtha-dīpikā-prakāśa)*, which were actually written in the 19th century. Kedaranath Datta Bhaktivinoda (1834-1914) wrote original Sanskrit hymns and *sūtra* texts with Bengali translations and commentary to make them available to a wider audience, but he was not alone. Nitya Svarūpa Brahmacārī of the Devakinandan Press in Vrindavan at the beginning of the 20th century is also worthy of mention.

Bhaktivinoda was a voluminous writer who produced over 100 literary works in Sanskrit, Bengali, and English from 1849-1907, approximately twenty of which were original[18]. *Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā* is perhaps Bhaktivinoda's most innovative work, both in terms of content and style. This three-part volume of history and theology combines Sanskrit verse and Bengali commentary. Furthermore, it applies modern scholastic methodology to its traditional insider theological perspective in an effort to reconcile both approaches (Dasa 1999:2,9). Shukavak Dasa explains, "He offered a plausible date for the *Bhāgavata* according to internal and extra-textual evidence; he pointed out corruptions in the text, and he brought attention to the human weakness of its author...Bhaktivinoda was showing that it was indeed possible to take a critical look at one's own tradition, and at that same time maintain a deep and abiding faith within that tradition" (2). In addition to the originality of the text content and hybridized language style, Bhaktivinoda's synthesized perspective was a novel literary contribution.

Bhaktvinoda also utilized his hybrid language style in *Śri-gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-stotram*, although this time coupling Sanskrit with English. The collection of Sanskrit verses describing Caitanya's teachings and the theology emerging from them was prefaced by forty-seven pages of introduction written in English (Dasa 1999:91). The vitality of this text can be expressed by the extent of its circulation beyond Bengali scholastic, popular, or expatriate circles. "The work was sent to various universities and intellectuals in different parts of the world and eventually found its way onto the book shelves of McGill University in Montreal, the University of Sydney in Australia and the Royal Asiatic Society of London (Dasa 1999:91). One could perhaps contend that despite the volume of literary work produced by Bhaktvinoda, the limited geographical scope of its audience demonstrates the limited vitality of Sanskrit. However, the international and scholastic audience of the *Śri-gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-stotram*, disputes this potential objection and thereby demonstrates the vitality of Bhaktvinoda's Sanskrit literature.

Bhaktivinoda's vast literary publications, much of which were in Sanskrit, also considerably impacted and expanded how the Gauḍīya tradition could view itself. Shukavak Dasa explains, "Bhaktivinoda's approach widened the limits of human reason and rational analysis with Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. It challenged the balance between traditional faith and human reason by allowing a greater degree of rational and symbolic understanding than might otherwise be permitted in Vaiṣṇava religious life. Bhaktivinoda's employment of the *ādhunika-vāda* allowed the *bhadralok* to experiment with new historical perspectives that were better suited to life in the nineteenth century" (Dasa 1999:252)[19]. Perhaps, Bhaktivinoda's greatest achievement was his synthesis of innovation and tradition to facilitate the Gauḍīya movement's transition into modernity. As Sanskrit was one of his primary tools in achieving this end, it is difficult to imagine how Sanskrit could be dead.

Literary production and discovery continued well into the 20th century and to some extent still persists. Haridas Das (1899-1957) was perhaps the most notable researcher in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school in the first half of the century (Brazinski 2016). He discovered original texts and commentaries and wrote many new Sanskrit commentaries to works that did not have them (*Āhnika-kaumudī* of Kavi Karṇapūra, *Āścarya-rāsa-prabandha* by Prabodhananda, *Mādhava-mahotsava* of Jīva Gosvāmin, to name just a few) along with their Bengali translations. These research developments increased popular awareness of the vastness of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literary tradition, both in the vernaculars and Sanskrit, thus increasing interest in its canonical texts and later writers. Other names that should be mentioned are Puri Dāsa (Bhakti Prasād Puri) and Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Babaji of Kusum Sarovar. This awareness and interest in the Sanskrit texts of the Gosvāmin-s and their followers continued unabated in the second half of the 20th century with new translations appearing in Hindi from the Gaur Gadadhar Press of Haridāsa Śastrī and the Harinam Press of Shyamlal Hakim in Vrindāvan[20]. Several accomplished scholars of Sāhitya also wrote noteworthy Sanskrit commentaries, specifically Shivprasad Bhattacharya Kavyatirtha on *Alaṅkāra Kaustubha*, Surendranath Shastri on *Dāna-keli Kaumudī*, and Krishna Vihari Misra on *Bhakti-rasa-vivecanam*.

The Gauḍīya Math, established by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati in 1916, sought to democratize Sanskrit learning so that it no longer remained the monopoly of caste *brāhmaṇa-s*. Anyone with the capacity to learn the language was encouraged to do so in order to enlist the gravitas of Sanskrit in the cause of evangelization. This democratization of Sanskrit has been a feature of its continued prestige and popularity. Indeed, the spreading of Krishna *bhakti* to other parts of the world has resulted in a huge upsurge of interest and scholarship, as well as in attempts to revive Sanskrit as a spoken language. Most of the books of the canon have been translated into English and have become the subject of scholarly research.

In the 21st century, Sanskrit literary production continues, albeit not at the same rate as in the premodern era. By way of example, two Vraja based scholars have recently published Sanskirt texts. Pandita Ānanda Gopāla Dāsa has written a very elaborate commentary on *Sarva-saṁvādinī* of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin, the first commentary every written on this text, in addition to a four volume work on Baladeva's *Govinda Bhāṣya* commentary of Vedānta Sūtra-s. Girirāja Kiśora Śāstri wrote a commentary on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*

Conclusion

The aftermath of Pollock's provocative argument that "Sanskrit is dead" is indicative of the complex and significant interests at stake. The ensuing debate has been useful in unearthing a more nuanced perspective of Sanskrit's recent history, contemporary function, and prospects for the future. While we draw a different conclusion than Pollock based on our own study, we are grateful to him for initiating and inspiring deeper research into the intellectual history of Sanskrit thought. In addition to our attempt to demonstrate that Sanskrit is not dead, the significant and novel literary contributions of the 16-17th century Gauḍīya tradition indicate Sanskrit's historical vibrancy. We hope our case study of Vraja can and will play a small role in this much larger project, and we don't doubt the variegatedness and richness such an exploration will surely produce. .

Appendix A

The complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin are as follows:*Haṁsadūta* (Poetry), *Uddhava-sandeśa* (poetry), *Śrīrādhā-* *kṛṣṇa-goṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, *Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-janma-tithi-vidhi* (worship), *Aṣṭādaśa-* *līlā-chanda* (Kṛṣṇa stories, poetry), *Dāna-keli-kaumudī* (play), *Śrī-bhakti-* *rasāmṛta-sindhu* (devotional poetics), *Śrī-ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (Madhura- rasa poetics), *prayuktākhyāta-candrikā* (Sanskrit verbs), *Mathurā-* *māhātmya* (description of holy places in Mathurā area), *Padyāvalī* (col- lection of verses about Kṛṣṇa bhakti), *Laghu-bhagavatāmṛtam* (Summary of the principles found in Bṛḥad-bhāgavatām of Sanātana Gosvāmin), *Nikuñja-rahasya-stava*(description of intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa), *Nāṭaka-candrikā* (definitions related to play), *Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka* (play), *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka* (play) (H. Dasa 1351).

The complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin are as follows: *Gopala-campū* (2 volumes, Life stories of Kṛṣṇa), *Śrīharināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇam* (complete grammar of Sanskrit), *Bṛhat-krama-sandarbha* (commentary on complete *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), *Laghu-krama-sandarbha* (abridged commentary on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), *Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣiṇī* (Commentary on the tenth canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), *Tattva-sandarbha* (Essence of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), *Bhagavat-sandarbha* (description of Bhagavān, the Supreme Person), *Paramātma-sandarbha* (description of the Immanent Being, Jīva, and Māyā), *Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* (Description of Kṛṣṇa, the Original form of Supreme Person), *Bhakti-sandarbha* (description of bhakti as the prescribed process), *Prīti-sandarbha* (description of unconditional love), *Saṅkalpa-kalpa-druma, Mādhava-mahotsva, Radhākṛṣṇārcana-dipikā* (process of worship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa), *Gopala-virudāvali* (prayers), *Rasāmṛta-śeṣa* (poetics), *Gāyatrī-vyākhyā* (Explanation of Gāyatrī mantra), *Commentary on Brahma-saṁhitā, Sūtra-mālikā, Dhātu-saṅgraha* (collection of Sanskrit roots), *Commentary on Yoga-sāra-tattva, Śrīkṛṣṇa-pada-cihna* (description of marks on the soles of Kṛṣṇa's feet), *Rādhikā-pada-cihna* (description of marks on the soles of Radha's feet), *Durgamasaṅgamanī* (commentary on *Śrībhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu*), *Locanarocanī* (commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*), *Harināma-vyākhya* (meaning of *mahāmantra*), *Yugalāṣṭaka* (prayer), *Upāsanā-tattva* (worship), *Anarpitacarī-śloka-vyākhyā* (commentary on the Anarpitacari verse), *Svarṇa-ṭīkā, Jāhnvāṣṭaka* (prayer) (H. Dasa 1249).

Appendix B

The complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī are as follows: *Rādhāsudhā-nidhi* (Poetry), *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* (biography), *Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛta* (poetry in praise of Vṛndāvana), *Saṅgīta-madhava* (Poery about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa *līlā*), *Āścarya-rāsa-prabandha* (poetry on *rāsalīlā*), Commentary on the 87th chapter of tenth canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Commentary on *Gīta-govinda*, commentary on *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, Commentary on *Gāyatrī-mantra* (H. Dasa 1290).

The complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Nārayaṇa Bhaṭṭa are as follows:*Vraja-bhakti-vilāsa* (description about the forests of Vraja), *Vraja-pradīpikā*, *Vrajotsva-candrikā* (description of festivals in Vraja), *Vraja-mahodadhi*, *Vrajotsvāhlādinī*, *Bṛhad-vraj-guṇotsva* (Description of the villages in Vraja), *Vraja-prakāśa*, *Bhakta-bhūṣaṇa-sandarbha* (Philosophy), *Bhakti-viveka* (principle of devotion), *Bhakti-rasa-taraṅgiṇī* (description of *rasa*-s of *bhakti*), *Sādhana-dipikā* (details about the practice of devotion), *Rasikāhlādinī* (commentary on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), *Dharma-pravartinī*, *Premāṅkura-nāṭaka* (Play) (H. Dasa 1272).

The complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravarti are as follows:*Śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛtam* (poetry), *Śrī-gaurāṅga-līlāmṛtam* (biography), *Aiśvarya-kādambinī* (theology), *Stavāmṛta-laharī* (panegyrics), *Sindhu-bindu* (devotion), *Ujjvala-kiraṇa* (devotional), *Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā* (theology), *Rāga-vartma-candrikā* (devotion), *Mādhurya-kādambinī* (devotion), *Gauraṅga-svarūpa-candrikā* (theology), *Camatkāra-candrikā* (poetry), *Kṣaṇadā-gīta-cintāmaṇi* (poetry), *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Sārārtha-varśiṇī* commentary on *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Bhakti-sāra-pradarśinī* commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary on *Ujjvala-Nilamaṇi*, *Bhakta-harśiṇi* commentary on *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, *Mahati* commentary on *Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, *Sukhavartinī* commentary on *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campu*, *Subodhinī commentary on Alaṅkāra-kaustubha*, Commentary on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Commentary on *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* (H. Dasa 1370).

The complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa is as follows: *Siddhānta-ratna* (Supplement to *Govinda-bhāṣya*, his commentary on Vedānta-sūtra), *Prameya-ratnāvalī* (philosophy), *Siddhānta-darpaṇa* (Philosophy), *Vedānta-syamantaka* (philosophy), Commentary on *The Ten Principal Upaniṣads*, Commentary on *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, *Gitā-bhuṣaṇa* commentary on *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Nāmārtha-sudhā* commentary on *Viṣṇū-sahasra-nāma*, *Govinda-bhāṣya* commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Vaiṣṇava-nandinī* commentary on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Sāraṅga-raṅgadā* commentary on *Laghu-bhagavatāmṛtam* of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi, *Rasika-raṅgadā* commentary on *Padyāvalī*, *Stavamālā-bhuṣaṇa* commentary on *Stavamālā*, Commentary on *Govinda-virudāvalī*, *Aiṣvarya-kādambinī*, Commentary on *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta*, Commentary on *Gopāla-champū*, *Vaiyakaraṇa-kaumudi* (Sanskrit grammar), *Kāvya-kaustubha* (rhetoric), *Sāhitya-kaumudī* (rhetorics), *Tattva-dīpikā* (philosophy), *Govinda-bhāṣya-kārikā* (philosophy) (Dasa 1986:1292).

Appendix C: Contemporary Sanskrit Schools in Vraja

1. Śrī Caitanya Sanskrit Śikṣā Saṁsthāna, Vṛndāvana
2. Śrī Dharma Saṅgha Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
3. Śrī Kuñjavihārī Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
4. Śrī Nimbārka Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
5. Śrī Raṅga-lakṣamī Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
6. Śrī Rāmanuja Hayagrīva Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
7. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Darśana Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
8. Śrī Brahma Vidyā Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
9. Śrī Gulaba Hari Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya Vṛndāvana
10. Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
11. Śrī Śrīnivāsa Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
12. Śrī Nārayaṇa Veda Vedāṅga Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
13. Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
14. Śrī Śyāmānanda Sanskrit Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
15. Śrī Rāmānanada Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
16. Śrī Bhakti Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Vṛndāvana
17. Śrī Śrīdhara Vidyāniketana, Vṛndāvana
18. Śrī Māthura Sanskrit Vidyālaya, Mathurā
19. Śrī Dvārkeśa Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Mathurā
20. Seth Biśanalāla Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Mathurā
21. Śrī Mādhava Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya, Govardhana

22. Śrī Sārvabhauma Sanskrit Mahavidyālaya, Govardhana
23. Śrī Nimbārka Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Neemagaon
24. Śrī Gājīpura Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya, Barasānā
25. Śrī Rājeśvarī Sanskrit Vidyālaya Barasānā
26. Śrī Caitanya Sanskrit Śikṣā samsthāna, Radhakuṇḍa
27. Śrī Gaurāṅga Sanskrit Vidyālaya, Rādhākuṇḍa
28. Śrī Ratana Moti Sanskrit Mahāvidyālaya, Gokula
29. Śrī Kārṣṇī Sanskrit Uttara Madhyamā Vidyālaya, Gokula
30. Institute of Oreintal Philosophy, Vṛndāvana

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Endnotes

[1] This is not an apples to apples comparison as different languages entered the Akademi at different times. "Sahitya Academi's programme was originally concerned with the fourteen languages enumerated in the Constitution of India, namely Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. During the first thirty years of Sahitya Academi, 8 languages were added to them— English in 1954, Sindhi in 1957, Maithili in 1965, Dogri in 1969, Manipuri and Rajasthani in 1971, Konkani and Nepali in 1975" (Rao 1985:62).

[2] We are not claiming Aurangzeb, nor Moghul rule more generally, as some sort of catch-all category explaining the decline of Sanskrit. Growse illuminates this sort of broad misconception, "Aurangzeb, the conventional bīte noire of Indian history, who is made responsible for every act of destruction" (194). However, neither are we throwing the baby out with the bath water; the impact of Aurangzeb's attacks in Vraja was considerable.

[3] This line of reasoning is called Kaimutika Nyāya, which is literally translated as "what to speak of" and sometimes translated as a fortiori. It is a principle used to indicate the greatness or weakness of some object or process. For example, to show tha caliber of a guru, one can say that even a neophyte disciple of the guru defeated a famous scholar in debate, so what to speak of the the guru himself.

[4] In what may be an attempt to insulate his argument from such challenges, Pollock acknowledges, "the world of Sanskrit is broad and deep, and it would be unsurprising to find different domains following different historical rhythms and requiring different measures of vitality" (2001:394). However, one could apply this very same logic to his case studies to argue the opposite point: Sanskrit is not dead though it may appear to be in these instances.

[5] An analysis of why the Gosvāmin-s wrote primarily in Sanskrit is not in the scope of this project. Tony Stewart seems to align with an argument made by Sheldon Pollock in his 2005 work *The Ends of Man at the End of Premodernity*. Stewart states, "I think it is clear now in retrospect that the community was engaged in a type of literary practice that in some ways mimicked the courts with their concern to cultivate a proper Sanskrit (universal) ethos for regulating actions and modulating power within the group" (Stewart 2010:ix). As an additional consideration, Rūpa composed Sanskrit works before meeting Caitanya

(De 1986:148). So regardless to what degree Stewart/Pollock's assertion may or may not be true, Rūpa's Sanskrit literary inclination was not a development of his newfound faith.

[6] The most flourishing period of Rūpa's literary activity falls between 1533-1550 CE, but it probably began as early as 1494 CE. Sanātana literary works were about the same time period and written accounts testify both he and his brother seem to have died in the same year. Sanātana's latest work was completed in 1554 CE. Jīva's literary works seem to have been complied between 1555-1592 CE(De 1986:160-4).

[7] Additional Sanskrit books written by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmin include Vaiṣṇava-toṣiṇī (commentary on the tenth canto of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) and *Digdarśinī* (commentary on *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*), *Līlā-stava*, *Laghu-harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇam*, *Daśama-tippaṇi* (H. Dasa 1398).

[8] See Appendix A, for a complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin

[9] See Appendix A, for a complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin

[10] Additional Sanskrit books written by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmin's Sanskrit include: *Bhāgavata-sandarbha* (This became the basis of six Sandarbha of Jīva Gosvāmin) and *Kriyā-sāra-dīpikā* (religious duties) (H. Dasa 1209).

[11] Additional Sanskrit books written by Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmin include: *Stavāvali* (prayers) and *Dāna-keli-cintāmaṇi* (poetry) (H. Dasa 1326).

[12] See Appendix B, for a complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī.

[13] See Appendix B, for a complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Nārayaṇa Bhaṭṭa.

[14] Besides these well-known authors, there have been many lesser known scholars in Vraja who wrote in Sanskrit. Śrī Radhā-kṛṣṇa-Dāsa Gosvāmin, who wrote Sādhana-dipikā and *Daṣaṣlokī-bhāṣya*, is such an example.

[15] While there is contestation to the date, De affirms 1615CE is most likely (1986:57).

[16] See Appendix B, for a complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravarti.

[17] See Appendix B, for a complete list of Sanskrit books written by Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhuṣaṇa.

[18] Shukavak Dasa, 8. He provides a complete list of all publication in Appendix 1, p. 283-295. The production of literary works includes those written, translated, or edited.

[19] *Ādhunika-vāda* can be translated as "modern approach", which refers to history as an evolutionary process. *Bhadraloka* refers to educated Bengali professionals who interacted with the British administration. (Shukavak Dasa 128-132, 16-17)

[20] Additional Sanskrit works produced by Gauḍīya scholars in the 20th century include: Viśvambharadeva Gosvāmin: 1. *Āstikya Darśanam*, 2. *Vedārtha-dīpikā*, 3. *Haribhakti-sarvasva*, *Śrigovonda-paricaryā*, 5. *Suvijñāna-ratnamālā*. Kanhaiyālāla Śāstri: *Śrīmādhava-sevā* commentary on *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Śrīgopījanaballabha Dāsa: *Śrī Rasika Malgala*. Śrīrādhānanadadeva Gosvāmin: *Śrī Rādhā-govinda Kāvyam*. Śrī Rāmanārāyaṇa: *Bhāva-bhāva-vibhāvikā commentary on Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Kṛṣṇa Das Baba 4).

Chapter 6

On "Feeding Tubes and Oxygen Tanks" for Sanskrit: In the light of the First Sanskrit Commission Report (1956–57)

– Jayaraman Mahadevan

Abstract

This paper focuses upon one statement from the paper "The Death of Sanskrit" (2001) of Prof. Sheldon Pollock which is- "Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language in a state of quasi-animation, but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead." (Pollock 2001: 393) There are two clear implications from this statement. Firstly – he implies that without the sponsorship of the Government, even the perceived 'quasi-animate' state of Sanskrit would not have been possible. Secondly – that the public and non-governmental players did not have any role at all in safe-guarding Sanskrit as Sanskrit has been never the language of the masses.

The First Sanskrit Commission report, hereafter, the Commission, assumes significance in this context. The Commission was constituted by the Government of India in 1956 with Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji as its chairman. Seven other scholars of repute from various parts of the

country were its members. The Commission crisscrossed the length and breadth of the country. In the words of the Commission's report "...to consider the question of the present state of Sanskrit Education in all its aspects" (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:1).What does the study of the Sanskrit Commission's detailed report reveal? Nearly five decades prior to the statement of Pollock in question (and its implications), one finds well researched facts and observations that render Pollock's statement redundant, or rather, ridiculous. It is also interesting to note that Pollock has taken care not mention this report in his paper. Thus, this paper endeavors to juxtapose various observations from the overlooked First Sanskrit Commission Report, that fly in the face of Pollock's aforementioned statement, and allow the readers to see for themselves the flaws and blemishes of Pollock's understanding of the status of Sanskrit.

1 The Trigger

The article "The Death of Sanskrit" (2001) by Sheldon Pollock offers various elements of *pūrva-pakṣa* for a Sanskritist. But, this paper focuses upon just one statement from the paper which is -

> "Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language in a state of quasi-animation, but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead." (Pollock 2001:393)

This statement is found in the third paragraph of the said article. Why just one statement and why this statement? To answer this straightaway - firstly, it has to be noted that the paper "Death of Sanskrit" appears in the year 2001. In the beginning of the paper Pollock states–

> "The state's anxiety both about Sanskrit's role in shaping the historical identity of the Hindu nation and about its contemporary vitality has manifested itself in substantial new funding for Sanskrit education, and in the declaration of 1999–2000 as the "Year of Sanskrit," with plans for conversation camps, debate and essay competitions, drama festivals, and the like."
> (Pollock 2001:392)

Though aimed at throwing light on the anxiety of the State, eventually unease in the mind of Pollock gets exposed caused by the apparent spike in funding for Sanskrit and related activities in 1999-

2000. And soon after, this triggered Pollock to conceptualize and eventually pen this paper in the year 2001. As can be observed, the above "Government feeding tubes oxygen tank" statement, directly indicates that trigger, which is at the root of the paper.

Secondly, it is also the first statement in the article in which Pollock unceremoniously states Sanskrit is dead. If this trigger-indicating statement is shown as untenable, it will symbolically indicate the relative strength of the superstructure that has been erected upon this by Pollock in the later part of his paper. Furthermore, it can also be stated that recourse has been taken to *sthālīpulāka-nyāya*– examining one grain of rice to see whether rest of the rice in the boiling pot is cooked - in evaluating Pollock's paper.

2 About the First Sanskrit Commission

The First Sanskrit Commission Report, passim, naturally assumes significance in this context. The Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1956 with Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji as its chairman. Seven other scholars of repute from various parts of the country were members. The objective of the Commission was, in the words of the Commission's Report :

> "...to consider the question of the present state of Sanskrit Education in all its aspects. To this end (p.8), "the tour programme of the Commission, was carried out in five laps, covered all the [then] 14 States of India and visited 56 centres and interviewed over 1,100 persons, representing various shades of opinion." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:1)

A study of the Sanskrit Commission's report reveals that nearly five decades before Pollock's statement in question already, the First Sanskrit Commission's report effectively presents appropriate "responses" to this statement and its implications. It is highly improbable that he is unaware of this report of 1957. In fact he mentions the year 1949 regarding the inclusion of Sanskrit in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution. He also makes a note of the awardees of the Sahitya Akademi since its inception in the year 1955. But conspicuously missing in this article is the mention of the Sanskrit Commission's report of 1957 which is an important and unique document regarding the status of Sanskrit in India. Our paper endeavors to juxtapose various observations from the First Sanskrit

Commission's report and help the readers see for themselves the flaw in Pollock's understanding of the status of Sanskrit.

3 Analyzing the statement

Pollock's statement is analyzed in its two parts in this paper.

Part 1: "Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language in a state of quasi-animation...

Part 2: "...but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead."

There are two clear implications for the first part of the statement. Firstly – he implies that without the sponsorship of the Government, even the perceived 'quasi-animate' state of Sanskrit would not have been possible either. Secondly – that the public and non-governmental players did not have any role at all in safeguarding Sanskrit, as Sanskrit, has been never the language of the masses.

The second part of the statement is very plain and is discussed as such.

3.1 First part of Pollock's Statement, implications and Response

3.1.1 The First Implication and its response - Oxygen Tanks or Slow Euthanasia?

Has the governmental aid really helped the survival of Sanskrit since whenever it was given? To this statement one finds a remarkable answer in the Sanskrit Commission's Report. It states

> "As pointed out already, the authorities did not allow the traditional system either to die out or to flourish, but, by a process of nominal assistance, retained it alongside of modem education, in an unhealthy condition, ever subject to difficulty-always, open to criticism."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:28)

This state of affairs is as regards the attitude of the authorities of the pre-independence era, is quite understandable. Even during the post independence years, we may note that in all these seven decades, there is no substantial change in this approach.

The Commission records that the status of Sanskrit post independence has not been any better than during the British rulers. It states -

> "This Commission, in the course of its tours, could see a feeling of regret and disappointment among the people that, while no positive steps had been taken for helping Sanskrit, the measures undertaken in respect of other languages have had adverse repercussions on it. The ultimate result of this has been that Sanskrit has not been allowed to enjoy even the status and facilities it had under the British Raj."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:7)

The Sanskrit Commission report goes further to add a powerful imagery by quoting a verse in Sanskrit regarding the Government's attitude towards Sanskrit post-independence. It states -

> In this connection, the Sanskrit Commission would like to quote an old verse, which many Sanskritists referred to and which graphically pictured their real feeling: " 'The night will pass and the bright day will dawn; the sun will rise and the lotus will bloom in all its beauty' While the bee, imprisoned in a closed bud, was thus pondering over its future, alas, an elephant uprooted the lotus-plant itself."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:8)

Further, it is important to note the fact that the Commission also makes it clear that the step-motherly attitude of the Government towards Sanskrit does not necessarily reflect the feelings of the people at large towards Sanskrit. It states –

> "On the one hand, Sanskrit scholars, members of the public, educationists and authorities were keenly alive to the importance of Sanskrit studies; and, on the other, there was one kind or another of official and administrative difficulty or lack of practical assistance which produced a sense of frustration." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:9)

Has the Government's indifference towards Sanskrit undergone any change now - five decades after the first Sanskrit Commission? The answer is an unfortunate no. It is evidenced by the following statement from the committee set up by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, recently (2016) to evolve a "Vision and Roadmap for the Development of Sanskrit – Ten year Perspective Plan" –

> "It is a fact that during the British period salary of Sanskrit teachers was half the salary of the salary of the teachers of other subjects due to which Sanskrit was looked down upon for long. Even today, in most of the states

> Sanskrit teachers who teach at Secondary and Higher Secondary level Vidyalayas are given Primary level teachers' salary, teachers who teach at UG and PG level Sanskrit Mahavidyalayas are given the salary of Secondary grade teachers'. Hence these Vidyalayas and Mahavidyalayas do not attract the talented teachers and students"
>
> (*Vision and Road Map for the Development of Sanskrit: Report:* 2016:5)

Wantonly or unwittingly, successive Governments in independent India trod the path of the erstwhile British masters. This observation of the committee puts in perspective the role of government in regard to the protection and promotion of Sanskrit.

As revealed by the above statements from the Sanskrit Commission report, the motive behind the minimal support to Sanskrit by successive governments has been brought to light. When the Governmental support has such motives as that of making Sanskrit appearing sick (though it might not be so), it leads us to the inevitable conclusion that governmental support or the lack of it cannot be taken as a correct indicator of the real status of Sanskrit. Hence it can be safely stated that Pollock has, on the basis of his above statement, allowed himself to be misled into assessing the real status of Sanskrit through the t(a)inted glasses of Governmental support.

3.1.2 The Second implication and its response:

This brings us to the second and more serious aspect as to the role of people and agencies other than the government in supporting and continuing the unbroken tradition of Sanskrit learning in the country.

A perusal of the Sanskrit Commission's report brings out the fact that even more than the role of the Government, it is the people of the country who are keeping the flame of Sanskrit knowledge burning. The Sanskrit Commission's report states that Sanskrit is associated with the 'cultural consciousness' (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:67) of the country and that the love of Sanskrit is "next only to that of patriotism towards Mother India" (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:p.65). Though the Sanskrit Commission states that the state of Sanskrit in the country leaves much to be desired – yet far from being 'dead' as speculated by Pollock - the Commission states that "About the enthusiasm of the people of India as a whole for Sanskrit, we have received,..., the most convincing evidence." (*Sanskrit*

Commission of India Report 1957: ii)

Following are the non-governmental players and factors that can be identified from the report of the First Sanskrit Commission–

(a) The Maharajas of the Princely States
(b) Hindu religious institutions
(c) People belonging to non-Brahmin castes and other religions
(d) Individual Traditional Pandits
(e) Nationalistic Spirit
(f) Role of voluntary Academies and Organizations
(g) People in General

The list pertains to the Pre-independent as well as post-independent eras. It is to be noted that the seeds sown in the pre-independent era have sprouted later. For example, the role of the kings is a pre-independent era factor, but it would be seen in the words of the Commission itself as to how those pre-independence traditions helped in the preservation of Sanskrit in the post-independence era.

The seven factors listed above are now to be considered one by one.

3.1.2.a The Maharajas

The Commission records that –

> Apart from honouring Sanskrit Pandits and musicians in their Darbars and on occasions of domestic celebrations, and national festivals, the Maharajas did two important pieces of service to Sanskrit studies - one, the organization into libraries of their Palace collections of Sanskrit manuscripts, and two, the setting up of Sanskrit colleges.
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:22)

The Commission enlists the Princely states that supported Sanskrit –

> "Darbhanga, Vizianagaram, Baroda, Nagpur, Jaipur, Indore, Gwalior, Mysore, Travancore, Kapurthala, Patiala, Jammu and Kashmir - to mention only the more prominent States - started their Sanskrit Colleges." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:22)

When one looks at the above list of princely states, it becomes evident that since the pre-independence era, even while under the British Raj, it is these princes and kings who truly supported Sanskrit studies. Pre independence British Government was indifferent, and the attitude of post-independence governments has already been pointed out.

The role of the Maharajas in fostering Sanskrit education inspired other wealthy individuals too. The Commission records - "Inspired by the example of the Princes, the Zamindars and smaller landlords and merchants also founded Sanskrit Colleges." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:22)

It is the Sanskrit organizations set up by the kings which were later converted into Government Sanskrit Colleges and Government manuscript repositories.

3.1.2.b Hindu Religious institutions

The role played by Hindu religious institutions comes next. Hinduism is often ridiculed for its mind boggling multiplicity of schools of philosophy and religious tenets. Though all these divergences exist among these religious denominations, they still were united in preserving Sanskrit which is the common thread. The Commission observers–

> "Maths, temples and other religious institutions established similar Colleges; and affluent individuals and public leaders and associations also followed, founding their own Sanskrit Colleges, or, by administrative direction, helping old religious and cultural endowments to start such colleges."
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:22)

3.1.2.c People belonging to Non-Brahmin castes and other Religions

Based on the first two points some may criticize that the kings and the priests had their own motives, i.e. dominating the others in society in promoting Sanskrit. But the Commission's report makes it clear that even Muslims and Christians in certain parts of the country actively participated in the learning of Sanskrit. Nor was it the case that the Brahmin community alone was learning and preserving Sanskrit. Cutting across the barriers of caste and religion, Sanskrit was embraced by all people in India. Neither was gender a barrier in learning Sanskrit. The following statements of the Commission testify to this –

> "That Sanskrit does not belong to any particular community is proved by Andhra and Kerala where the entire non-Brahman classes are imbued with Sanskrit, and speak a language highly saturated with Sanskrit. In Kerala, even Izhavas, Thiyas, Moplas and Christians read Sanskrit. In Madhya Pradesh, we were told, a paper in Sanskrit was compulsory at the School Final Examination and even 66 Muslims took it. In a Lucknow Intermediate College, there are Muslim girls studying Sanskrit; in Gujarat, Parsis study it; in Panjab, there are several Sikhs among Sanskrit students and teachers, and Sastris and research scholars in Sanskrit. The Director of Public Instruction of Madhya Pradesh, who is a Christian, told us that he advised the Anglo-Indian students also to read Sanskrit. It was necessary that, as future citizens of India, they gained an insight into the mind and the culture of the bulk of the Indian people. And this, he added, was possible only through the study of Sanskrit."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:64)

This patronage of Sanskrit by Muslims and Christians is not a new phenomena. The Commission opines that it is part of the historical continuity of the interest of the non-Hindu communities in Sanskrit. To quote –

> "This aspect of Sanskrit, that it was not exclusively religious, was appreciated even by some of the Muslim rulers of India, who patronised Sanskrit literature, and, in some cases (as in Bengal and Gujarat), had their epigraphic records inscribed in Sanskrit. It was the scientific and secular aspect of Sanskrit literature that made the Arabs welcome Indian scholars to Baghdad to discourse on sciences like Medicine and Astronomy, and to translate books in these subjects into Arabic. The Ayurveda system of medicine, until recently, was the truly National Indian System, which was practised everywhere, and access to this was through Sanskrit books, which even Muslim practitioners of the Ayurveda in Bengal studied." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:79)

This is yet another statement from the Commission's report which is relevant to be quoted here–

> "In the course of our tours in South India, we interviewed several non-Brahmans in high position and active in public life, business, etc., and we found them all favourable to Sanskrit. In Madras City itself, we found that, both in the recognised schools and private classes, non-Brahmans, and even a few Muslims and Christians, studied Sanskrit. In one of the High Schools of Chidambaram, a Muslim student was reported to have

> stood first in Sanskrit; and in another School, there were Harijans among the Sanskrit students. In Chidambaram we were glad to find a group of leading non-Brahman merchants of the town who appeared before us for interview as staunch supporters of Sanskrit education and culture."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:65)

The Commission further adds –

> "In Tanjore also, we were told by the Headmasters and Sanskrit teachers of local schools that non-Brahmans, Muslims and Christians freely took Sanskrit. It was again the non- Brahmans, particularly the great benefactors belonging to the Chettiar community, who had, in the recent past, endowed many Pathasalas for Veda and Sanskrit."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:66)

Thus it becomes evident from the above excerpts that all religious groups and caste groups patronized Sanskrit. Moreover, it also becomes evident that there is also no north-south divide in promoting Sanskrit.

From the Commission's report it was shown that cutting across religious, caste divisions people learn and love Sanskrit. It is very educative to note, when we see the Sanskrit Commission state that, even in the creation of Sanskrit literature over the ages, it was not the case that it was just one community was involved. The Commission notes –

> "It must be further pointed out that the large mass of literature in Sanskrit was not produced by any particular community. Several instances can be quoted of non-Brahman and non-Hindu authors who have made significant contributions to Sanskrit literature. It is definitely wrong to assume that Sanskrit represents only the religious literature of the Hindus."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:79)

3.1.2.d Individual Traditional Pandits

Apart from various non-governmental organizations it was finally the individual scholars who stood for the protection and perpetuation of Sanskrit. The Commission states that –

> "In addition to these two agencies, namely, the Government-organised Sanskrit Colleges, such as the Banaras and Calcutta Colleges, and the different Colleges of the Princely States and the private and religious agencies, there was also the third channel through which the Sanskrit

> tradition continued to flow, namely, the one-Pandit schools. In fact, this tradition of one-Pandit schools was alive in all regions of India in a greater or lesser degree, according to the past history of each place. The tempo of modernisation had not fully swept away the Pandit of the traditional type and his institutions."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:22)

The Commission truthfully records the level of scholarship among those Pandits. It states –

> "We specially enquired whether the Pandits still carried on the tradition of writing new commentaries or dialectical works. We were sorry to note that the number of outstanding Pandits of the old type was generally not large; in some States, they could be counted on one's fingers. Some Pandits, however, did continue their literary activity; a few of them have, under the inspiration of modern research, produced critical and expository treatises in Sanskrit or in the regional languages on Sastraic and other general philosophical subjects."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:45)

It becomes evident from the above quote that the level of scholarship certainly has come down. But it has not died down completely.

Further, in the context of revival of Non-formal Śāstra Learning System the recent 2016 MHRD Committee states the following -

> "Under this stream, Gurukula system will be revived and the expertise of traditional scholars who still adhere to their traditions and do not leave their place of residence will be utilized. Each such traditional Scholar of Shastric excellence will teach traditional Shastras in a traditional way maintaining their way of living and transmitting such knowledge".
> (*Vision and Road Map for the Development of Sanskrit: Report*: 2016:26)

This quote also clearly testifies to the existence of traditional scholars with high level of erudition in *Śāstra*-s even today. The Sanskrit Commission also records the following regarding the existing level of scholarship during its period –

> "We also found that the Sanskrit Muse was still an inspiration and that the Pandits everywhere wrote poems and plays in Sanskrit. Of course, Sanskrit was very freely used as a means of communication and for the expression of all current ideas. We actually met some Pandits who could employ Sanskrit with eloquence and oratorical effect."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:45)

On the question of how the pandits maintain their level of scholarship and even refine it amidst the gloom of discouragement all around, the Commission states that–

> "Among the activities, which keep up the scholarly interest of the Pandits and also afford them some encouragement and help, are the Sabhas or the Sadas (learned gatherings), which are held from time to time by rulers, Zamindars, rich men, Acharyas and public associations. The former Princely States used to hold such gatherings once a year on the occasion of some festival, like the Dasara. The religious Teachers, Acharyas, still hold such gatherings of Pandits; also whenever any Pandit from a different part of the country visits an Acharya, he is engaged in a Sastrartha or is asked to lecture, and is honoured with presents and cash-gifts. There are also some private endowments which arrange for such Pandit Sadas, once a year, on Rama-navami, Krishna-jayanti, and similar occasions. In some of the temples, Pandits are similarly invited to give expositions and are honoured. In fact, it was these public debates in Sastras which had been the main inspiration for the growth of the thought and literature in the field of Sanskrit. And it would be by their resuscitation that the old intensity of Sastra-learning could be retained and promoted." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:45)

The Commission records that along with the Traditional Pandits, 'Sanskritists of the modern type' had the capability to converse in Sanskrit. The following is the relevant quote from the report regarding this –

> Just as many of the replies to the Questionnaire received by the Commission were in Sanskrit, quite a number of interviews also took place in Sanskrit. It was not the Pandits alone who gave their evidence in Sanskrit; many Sanskritists of the modern type also freely discussed with the Commission through the medium of Sanskrit. This once again proved that Sanskrit still continued to be the lingua franca of Sanskrit scholars of this country, irrespective of the different regions to which they belonged. (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:9)

Thus the Commission not only brings to light the contribution of individual Sanskrit scholars in the survival of Sanskrit but it also records the level of their knowledge as well as the *modus operandi* by which sound scholarship is maintained. As vouched by recent MHRD Committee, such observations hold good even after almost five decades of the preparation of the first Sanskrit Commission Report.

3.1.2.e Nationalistic spirit – A catalyst to Sanskrit preservation

The Sanskrit Commission notes that the nationalistic spirit during the pre independence era also served to protect our culture and the language. The following are the words of the Sanskrit Commission in this regard –

> "Two circumstances averted the rot to some extent: one, the Princely States and the native patterns of life there; and the other, the new awakening in the country of a nationalistic spirit which sought to make up for the drawbacks in the scheme of education on the cultural side by founding institutions of cultural importance. Thanks to both of these, a network of Sanskrit colleges of a quasi-modern set-up came into being."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:28)

This indicates how Governmental support, or the lack of it, does not by itself settle something. The emotional bonding people have towards Sanskrit is what has sustained Sanskrit. The above quote might lead to an understanding that Sanskrit rides on the nationalistic spirit. But the Commission notes that the relation between Sanskrit and the nationalistic spirit is symbiotic. It states that Sanskrit has the potential to strengthen the solidarity of our nation. It observes –

> "...a distinguished group of India's thought-leaders that Sanskrit can very well be rehabilitated as a pan-Indian speech, to strengthen the solidarity of Modern India. Indeed, to emphasise this point, a witness, appearing before the Commission, suggested that if the Sanskrit Commission had come before the States Reorganisation Commission, many of the recent bickerings in our national life could have been avoided." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:81)

3.1.2.f Role of NGO-Academies in keeping up popular interest

The following observation by the Sanskrit Commission regarding the active role played by non-Governmental, voluntary organizations, deals a decisive blow to the 'governmental oxygen tank' supposition of Pollock. The Commission's report reads -

> "In all regions there are now Sanskrit Academies, Associations, Sabhas, Parisads, etc., which organise the celebration of Sanskrit Poets' Days; lectures on Sanskrit subjects; Sanskrit classes; competitions in Sanskrit essay-writing, Sanskrit elocution, and original composition (Short Story, Poem, Play); Sanskrit Recitals and Dramas; and publication of cheap

> booklets in Sanskrit. All of these keep up popular interest in Sanskrit. The names of many such associations, whose representatives met us, may be seen in the lists in the Appendices." "The Sanskrit Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, the Sanskrit Academy, Madras, the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, the Samskrita Visva Parishad which has now over 500 branches all over India, the Brahmana Sabha, Bombay, which has a Sanskrit dramatic troupe, the Akhil Bharatiya Samskrita Sahitya Sammelan, Delhi, may be specially mentioned among the bodies which have been doing sustained work of more than a local provenance. Recently, in Nagpur and Ujjain, societies have been established for the study and propagation of Kalidasa's works, and we were pleased to note that the respective State Governments were helping these societies. The Kalidasa Society at Ujjain, we were told, had a fund of Rs. 1 1/4 lakhs of its own. There are several organisations in the country whose object is to popularise the study of the Gita. Establishments like the Svadhyaya Mandal, Pardi, and the Veda-Dharma-Paripalana-Sangham, Kumbhakonam, take interest in the popularisation of Vedic thought and literature. Among the modern neo-Hindu movements, the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission are doing excellent work for the spread of interest in Sanskrit and its knowledge. Many Sanskrit Colleges and the Sanskrit Departments of Colleges have Associations, which organise regular lectures on Sanskrit subjects, and sometimes also produce Sanskrit dramas." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:46)

The Commission also observes in this regard–

> "For outside these educational institutions, there is in the country a network of voluntary organisations. The number and the extent of planned activities of these private bodies only underline the need for supplementing what is being done for Sanskrit through the official set-up." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:67)

The above comment is also an eye-opener. The government is required to supplement the work of voluntary organizations. This means that the zeal and impetus to preserve and perpetuate Sanskrit is already present in the people.

Going by the information currently available in the website of Rashtirya Sanskrit Sansthan (for the year 2009-2010), 767 voluntary Sanskrit Institutions receive financial assistance from the Government. This is to give a pointer to the probable number of voluntary Sanskrit organizations that still exist in this country. This implies that there might be more organizations which do not receive or require governmental support for their activities.

3.1.2.g People in General – The Undercurrent

Apart from various agencies which operate in an organized manner, the Sanskrit Commission indicates the presence of an undercurrent of love for Sanskrit among the people of the country which keeps alive the tradition of Sanskrit learning and dissemination.

The Commission states that–

> "it is possible for an Indian or a foreigner knowing no other language than Sanskrit to be able to find throughout the whole of India some persons everywhere who can communicate with him in Sanskrit".
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:81)

Apart from indicating the pan-Indian presence of Sanskrit, the above statement may also imply that speakers of Sanskrit may be far and few in between. But regarding the undercurrent of love towards Sanskrit in the heart of people of this land, the Commission makes this remarkable observation–

> "Generally speaking, the people of India love and venerate Sanskrit with a feeling which is next only to that of patriotism towards Mother India. This feeling permeates the common man, the litterateur and the educationist, the businessman, the administrator and the politician. Everybody realises its cultural importance and knows that whatever one cherishes as the best and the noblest in things Indian is embedded in Sanskrit."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:66)

Another noteworthy observation of the Commissions about the general feeling of people regarding Sanskrit comes during the discussion of national language status for Sanskrit, a race which it lost to Hindi. It states –

> "After Independence, the Constituent Assembly decided that the official language of India was to be Hindi written in Devanagari script, and this was put in the Constitution. But the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly on this question were anything but smooth, and though there was a tacit agreement in this matter, Sanskrit never ceased to loom in the background. A general feeling was there that if the binding force of Sanskrit was taken away, the people of India would cease to feel that they were parts of a single culture and a single nation. The readiness with which Hindi received the support of a large section of the Indian people was because Hindi appeared to make a stand for Sanskrit. The support of Hindi in a way meant laying stress on the unity of India through Sanskrit, even if it were through the intermediacy of Hindi. The aspirations

> of a free Indian people, it was thought, could be best expressed through Sanskrit, functioning through the Modern Indian Languages."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:70)

Many state governments appointed Commissions prior to the first Sanskrit Commission to assess the interest of people in Sanskrit. These Commissions have time and again established the innate love among the masses towards Sanskrit. To quote the words of the Commission as an example -

> "The old Madhya Pradesh Government had appointed in 1955 a Committee to go into the question of Sanskrit institutions, and here again, we would like to emphasise, the verdict of the public opinion had been in favour of preserving the traditional style of Sanskrit Education with the introduction of the necessary elements of modern knowledge."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:42)

The Commission makes an interesting remark which gives a sense that English education has inadvertently sparked off renewed interest in Sanskrit and culture. The lack of imparting of cultural education in the traditional set-up itself seems to have suggested to the educated people to turn to their roots. The Commission observes -

> More recently, owing to a new awakening among the educated middle class and also owing to the interest of some of the leading citizens in the locality, expositions of the epics, the Gita, the Upanisads, Vedanta, Dharma, etc., have become a regular and organised activity in some places. These expositions are arranged as public lectures to large audiences or as private classes to select groups. They have, indeed, proved a great source of help to the Pandits. The Pandits are in demand also for individual tuition in the Gita or Vedanta which some well-to-do persons desire to have. This appears to be an expanding activity and augurs well for the revival of interest in Sanskrit.
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:45)

In the same vein the Commission further observes that –

> "In the course of our tours, we noticed everywhere an unmistakable awakening of the cultural consciousness of the people. There was .a keen awareness of the importance of Sanskrit among people at large; and we soon realised that a complete picture of the situation regarding Sanskrit could not be had only by visiting Schools, Colleges, Universities and Pathasalas." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:67)

Thus, if the *pāṭhaśāla*-s, schools and colleges themselves cannot be the true indicators of the real situation of Sanskrit in the country, then it is very clear that the government, as has been shown above, which has not so favourable an attitude towards Sanskrit can never be the indicator of the situation of Sanskrit in the country. And Pollock’s statement that only the government oxygen tank helps survival of Sanskrit is grossly incorrect and his pronouncement of death of Sanskrit based on it is untenable.

Finally, regarding the role of general masses in the revival of Sanskrit the Commission states –

> “These voluntary public activities in the field of Sanskrit are all-comprehensive - general and special, popular and learned, scholastic as well as artistic, literary as well as organisational. In fact, it was these activities among the general public which struck us as the most encouraging circumstance. They definitely pointed to the recapture of that spirit and atmosphere, which would help Sanskrit again to.emerge with a fresh vitality and force.”
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:67)

3.1.3 What then is the role of the Government in promotion of Sanskrit?

The seven real factors for the perpetuation of the Sanskrit as brought to light by the Sanskrit Commission Report were presented above. Will this then mean that the Government has no role to play in the promotion and preservation of Sanskrit? The detailed report of the Commission indeed is full of recommendations to the Government in that regard. But the Commission is of a considered view that Sanskrit in no way, needs government ‘oxygen tanks’ or ‘feeding tubes’. Rather, to quote the words of the Commission -

> “Already there are large endowments and other resources in the country which, with the help and direction of the Government, can be properly harnessed for the purposes set forth by us.”
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:293)

Hence Pollock’s ‘government oxygen tank’ statement appears highly unwarranted and unrealistic. The Commission’s report implies that facilitation and not mere funding is what is required from the government towards preservation of Sanskrit. This is with regard to the first half of the statement of Pollock which is the main focus of this paper.

3.2 The Second part of Pollock's Statement and its Response - Some observers who won't agree!

Let us also consider the second half of Pollock's statement and the Sanskrit Commissions "responses" to that briefly before concluding this paper. The second half of the statement of Pollock reads -"...but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead". (Pollock 2001: 393).

3.2.a Observers - 1

At the outset, it is obvious that the highly qualified members of Sanskrit Commission are not part of the team of Pollock's brand of 'observers'. It is to be noted that the members of Sanskrit Commission were not mere scholars, but they were 'observers' too, but in a real sense. As has been stated in the introduction, the members of the Commission travelled the length and breadth of the country. The itinerary of the various scholars, by the day and by the hour even, is available as official documents. In the course of their work, they keenly "observed" not only the state of Sanskrit but also the stature of Sanskrit. Further they clearly indicate that Sanskrit is not dead. Hence there is no question of its revival. It's just an issue of modernization of Sanskrit. The following quote captures the Sanskrit Commission's take on whether Sanskrit is dead-

> "Sanskrit at that time permeated all aspects of Indian life, and so there could be no question of reviving it. Only there was an attempt to modernise its study. The place of Sanskrit in Indian life and in the Indian set-up was taken for granted by the nationalist workers before Independence. When Bankim Chandra Chatterji composed his National Song Vande Mataram about the year 1880, he could not have foreseen what an importance this song would later on acquire in the national movement, of which the two words, Vande Mataram, practically became the basic mantra, the Rastra-Gayatri, if we may say so. He composed this song in Sanskrit (with a few Bengali sentences within) as the most natural thing. The place of Sanskrit was so obvious that no one gave any special thought to it."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:69)

The following quote from the Commission's report is even more powerfully direct on whether Sanskrit is dead or alive –

> "Even at the present day Sanskrit is very very living, because a large number of people use Sanskrit in their conversation, when they come from different parts of the country, and composition in Sanskrit, in both prose and verse, goes on almost unabated. It has been possible to write a history of recent Sanskrit literature as it has developed, say, during the last century and a half. Entire conferences are conducted wholly or at least to a very large extent through the medium of Sanskrit. In the popular Purana recitations, the reciters who have all the art of telling a story dramatically use by preference a highly Sanskritised Bengali, Telugu, Oriya, Kannada or Panjabi, which is largely understood even by the unlettered masses. It is not uncommon to find religious lecturers giving discourses in simple Sanskrit, and they are generally understood by people possessing a slight education in their own mother-tongues. And above all, there is a tremendous love, which is something very close to veneration, for Sanskrit. And when Sanskrit is now being used even to express modern scientific or political ideas in essays or discourses on various modern subjects, it cannot be said to have closed the door to further development - it has still life in it. All these things would go to establish that Sanskrit is still a living force in Indian life. It would be almost suicidal to neglect and gradually to relegate into oblivion as something dead and useless this very vital source of national culture and solidarity." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:88-89)

3.2.b Observers - 2

The Commission quotes University Education Commission (p.3) (December 1948- August 1949) and states that – "Sanskrit was best suited for spiritual training as it embodies the element of morality in the larger sense." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:3)

Again, the esteemed members of University Education Commission who seem to envisage a futuristic role for Sanskrit in moral and spiritual education, also are not part of Pollock's 'observers' team.

3.2.c Observers - 3

The members of Official Languages Commission (OLC) (June 1955-June 1956) of the Government of India, quoted in the First Sanskrit Commission report also do not seem to be in Pollock's 'most observers'. Because, they state (p.4)-

> "It is hardly necessary to add that, besides the current regional languages, there is an immense amount of work which needs to be done

> in respect of Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrits, Apabhramsa, etc. The Sanskrit language pre-eminently and the other ancient languages in different degrees have powerfully influenced current Indian speeches and a study of these has an obvious' bearing on the study of contemporary forms of speech" (p. 218). The OLC observations quoted by Sanskrit Commission further states that (p.4) "All our languages, including what are known as the Dravidian languages, have through all the centuries habitually drafted, in a greater or less degree, to meet every new situation and requirement for expression of a new idea or shade of meaning, upon that vast and inexhaustible treasure-house of vocabulary, phrase, idiom and concept comprised by the Sanskrit language and literature. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Puranas and the Sastras, the Classical poems, dramas and literary masterpieces of Sanskrit have served throughout those centuries not only as the reservoir of ideas, sentiments and parables to be drawn by all for the embellishment of their literary output, but also as benchmarks of literary excellence, as standards for social conduct, as examplars of morality, and, in short, as the repository of wit and wisdom of all the Indian peoples throughout the ages..."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:4)

3.2.d Observers – 4

Interestingly, even Jawaharlal Nehru does not agree that Sanskrit is dead. The Commission quotes independent India's first prime minister in this regard. It states–

> "When Jawaharlal Nehru made the following observations about the importance of Sanskrit in India, he only reiterated the general belief of the Indian people, and the considered views which have been expressed not only by the greatest thinkers and leaders of India, but also by foreign scholars and specialists in Indian history and civilisation who are in a position to appraise objectively the value of Sanskrit: "If I was asked what is the greatest treasure which India possesses and what is her finest heritage, I would answer unhesitatingly it is the Sanskrit language and literature, and all that it contains. This is a magnificent inheritance, and so long as this endures and influences the life of our people, so long the basic genius of India will continue"."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:71-72)

The Commission's report also brings in another quote from the Jawaharlal Nehru to imply that Sanskrit is not only alive, but it is the language that has the potential to even out the balance in education which is leaning towards only the sciences. The report reads –

> "And specially in modern times when a sort of dangerous over-weightage is being given to Sciences and Technology, the Humanities in Sanskrit will prove greatly helpful in restoring the proper balance. It is, indeed, highly significant that, as Prime Minister Shri Nehru told this Commission, Professor Oppenheimer, the great American atomic scientist, spends considerable time in reading Sanskrit and Pali."
>
> (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:76)

3.2.e Observers - 5

It seems that even (most) Western Universities and its academia are not part of "the observers" of Pollock who declared Sanskrit as dead. The Commission's report states - "...the West knows India as "Sanskrit India", and whenever an Indian University celebrates its jubilee, a Western University normally sends its felicitations in a Sanskrit address..." (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:89)

Adding a contemporary dimension to this, even in 2007 when the then president of India APJ Abdul Kalam visited Greece he was greeted by his Greece counterpart Karolos Papoulias in Sanskrit. A news report on this states –

> "It was a pleasant surprise for President A P J Abdul Kalam when his Greek counterpart Karolos Papoulias greeted him in Sanskrit at the banquet ceremony hosted in honour of the visiting dignitary. "Rashtrapati Mahabhaga, Suswagatam Yavana deshe Bhawatam (Mr President, welcome you in Greece)", thus began the Greek President his speech at the banquet hosted at the Presidential palace on Thursday night much to the delight of the Indian delegation"
>
> (*Times of India*, Apr 27, 2007)

Thus it becomes evident from the above that, like the first part of Pollock's statement, the second part too, to state in the language of Tarka (Indian Logic), seems to have a *sat-pratipakṣa* (a valid counter-example) in the light of the First Sanskrit Commission Report.

4 Conclusion:

Based on the views gleaned from the Sanskrit Commission's report (1957), it could be seen that, considered whether in parts or as a whole, one of the very initial statements of Pollock in his paper Death of Sanskrit (2001), has been rendered null and void decades prior to his statement.

With respect to this statement, this redundancy might be attributed to the non-serious and frivolous outlook of Pollock, if the following might be taken as an inadvertent admission towards that end in his article "The Death of Sanskrit". In the sentence that precedes 'oxygen tank' statement he states - "Its cultivation constitutes largely an exercise in nostalgia for those directly involved, and, for outsiders, a source of bemusement that such communication takes place at all." (Pollock 2001:393)

True. For an outsider (like Pollock) Sanskrit might be a "source of bemusement". But the insiders, whose views have been adequately presented in Sanskrit Commission's report, look at Sanskrit as (p.279) - "...one of the bases of our national culture and solidarity" (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:279) and as the source that "will provide a base for the promotion of International Understanding in the East and the West". (*Sanskrit Commission of India Report* 1957:279)

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Chapter 7

Sanskrit: the Phoenix Phenomenon

– K S Kannan and H R Meera

Introduction

The stalwarts of Western Indology have been held in great esteem for a long time now and in many instances their word has been taken as final on various topics. The extensive studies that they have made, the intense interest they have shown in learning about an alien culture, and the inter-disciplinarity they have brought into the studies have all been, rightly, respected. This bespeaks, though, of a scholar subjecting a specimen to scrutiny where the specimen is passive, at the receiving end of the attention.

For a true intellectual exchange to happen, however, it is necessary for both the parties – the examiner and the examined - to interact as equals, subjecting each other and each other's methods to scrutiny. The current paper is one such attempt - to return the attention by considering the claim of "death of Sanskrit" made by Sheldon Pollock, a leading American Orientalist, in his paper of 2001.

This paper aims to

(a) summarize the points made by him in as dispassionate and accurate a manner as possible,

(b) analyse the same from various angles,

(c) discuss the propriety of the data selected and analysed by him,

(d) discuss the general methodological idiosyncrasies betrayed in his writings, and

(e) provide pointers to the *uttarapakṣin*-s – as to where further work is necessary to possibly uncover more data, and do greater justice to the issue.

In the following section (1), we briefly present the issues (that Pollock touches upon) more-or-less as bullet points in order to capture their essence (words within double quotes " " are the ones cited verbatim from Pollock).

1 Synopsis of the thesis

The introductory portion of the essay gives us a picture of Pollock's take on the political scenario (viz. the ascent to power of BJP) which makes Sanskrit as the main actor in its identity politics. In sum, his take is that Hindus are being fed a distorted picture of their past ("Hindutva propagandists have sought to show...that Sanskrit is indigenous to India...Sanskrit is considered...the source and sole preserver of world culture" (Pollock 2001:392)). He traces its "melancholy" roots to the early days of independence when Sanskrit was included as one of the recognised languages of the Republic of India. Even though this has ensured that Sanskrit Universities and institutions have received a lot of funding, Sanskrit literature does not show any growth. Even with all the awards, grants, and promotion via All India Radio, school curricula etc, Sanskrit is as good as being in a coma, kept alive artificially "as an exercise in nostalgia". And hence "in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead".

Pollock points out that the long history of Sanskrit makes it difficult to have one measure of vitality given "the different historical rhythms" (Pollock 2001:394) but he decides on a measure in that very paragraph – viz. the production of *kāvya*, since "it is in itself often an argument of how language is to be used , indeed, about how life is to be lived" (Pollock 2001:394)implying that he will decide on the life of Sanskrit based solely on the quality[1] and quantity of the production of *kāvya*.

After quoting a Gujarati poet who talks of the 'death of Sanskrit' in 1857, he terms that this story is "only part, and only intuition", which implies that he is about to provide the full story, sans an intuitional approach, and with hard evidence.

In order to prove his avowed thesis of the death of Sanskrit literary culture as a historical process, he selects 4 points in history where we see disappearance or degeneration of Sanskrit literature – viz

(a) Kashmir after 13th century CE
(b) Vijayanagara after 16th century CE
(c) Mughal court in mid-17th century CE
(d) Bengal in the 19th century CE

We will summarize the essential points for all the four stages in history (sections 1.1 to 1.4) followed by the summary of his conclusion as the fifth part (1.5).

1.1 Kashmir:

1.1.1 Pollock gives a detailed picture - of the presentation of *Śrīkaṇṭha Carita* by Maṅkha in the royal assemblage in the presence of several preeminent scholars. The description of this peak of brilliant scholarship is followed by the denouement that this was the last of Kashmir's generation of Sanskrit poets of note. He narrates in detail how the production of literature "reduced to *stotra*-s", and how nothing innovative by way of literary theories got produced at all after the 11th century.

1.1.2 The nearly dead Sanskrit tradition (during the reign of Hindu kings) is revived during the reign of the Muslim ruler Sultan Zain-ul-'abidin who established peace after a long period of tumult. Here did get composed Jonarāja's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* along the lines of Kalhaṇa's, "only, much less aesthetic", in the words of Pollock and the work of Śrīvara continuing that (again, a barer chronicle than its predecessor). Pollock also mentions that even though there was no serious original work from Śrīvara, his *Subhāṣitāvalī* implies a "reasonably accomplished curatorial study of Sanskrit at the Sultan's court or had a substantial library". A significant conclusion of Pollock here is this: even though Śrīvara's anthology mentions a number of poets regarding whom much is not known (and hence could have lived and produced work during that 300 year period - where Pollock claims not much work was done), the samples in the anthology do not prove that anything of significance got produced in the literary field between the 12th and 15th centuries

1.1.3 Pollock lists the possible reasons for this literary collapse viz. (i) loss of important texts (ii) Mongol invasion of 1320 (iii) simple non-availability of texts to modern editors. He then dismisses them all in one stroke that they do not seem likely. His reasoning is this: important texts were getting written and transmitted out of Kashmir for several centuries and for the centuries under question, there is nothing such that has happened; hence, nothing got produced during the time. According to him, the texts of the works that have been preserved, date to 12th century or even earlier, which strengthens the case that nothing got produced after 12th century.

1.1.4 For the singular death of the literary culture, Pollock traces the reason to the changes in socio-political sphere. His argument goes thus: It was because of the royal patronage (what he calls "courtly-civic ethos") that Sanskrit sustained its vitality; during this period, however, there was no royal patronage, and this caused Sanskrit literature to die. The Hindu kings who have been described by Kalhaṇa were breaching the limits of degeneracy and situations got much worse as time passed. He substantiates the evidence of deterioration by citing a paucity of any mention of good works, or indeed, any poets, in Jonarāja's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*.

1.1.5 Concluding, Pollock draws attention to a passage in Jonarāja's work which describes how the Sultan longed to have "an epiphany" with Goddess Śāradā, but how he ended up breaking Her image. Pollock quotes Jonarāja "This no doubt occurred...because of the presence of the barbarians. A king is held responsible for the transgressions of his underlings".

1.2 Vijayanagara

1.2.1 The second sample chosen is the multilingual empire of Vijayanagara which had inscriptions issued in Kannada, Telugu, Sanskrit and Tamil. He states that the 350 years of the empire saw literary productions in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit. His accusation here is that even though the rulers were of Tulu or Kannada lineages, they did very little to promote courtly literature in Kannada

1.2.2 The example he picks up is, of course, of Kṛṣṇadevarāya (who ruled from 1509-1529 CE). According to Pollock there was only Timmaṇṇakavi as the Kannaḍa court poet whose only accomplishment was the completion of Kumāravyāsa's *Bhārata*. Kṛṣṇadevarāya himself wrote his work *Āmukta-mālyada* in Telugu. While the courtly poetry in Kannada was so limited, the Kannada literature outside the court was thriving – with the saint-poets like Purandaradāsa and Kanakadāsa, and poets like Lakṣmīśa whose *Jaimini Bhārata* is very popular even to this day. The contrast, he says, is very stark.

1.2.3 He then comments on the paradoxes in the Sanskrit literature of the time. In his opinion, while there was phenomenal scholarship in Sanskrit ("almost industrialized magnitude" p 401), the literary creativity was exhausted. The administrators of the kingdom were very learned in terms of cultural literacy as well, but according to him, their learning was only reproductive and not original.

1.2.4 The Sanskrit compositions that were produced in that period did not get, according to him, much circulation. They saw some immediate productions and were read during their time but didn't attract much attention – no commentator glossed on them, nor were verses selected for an anthology, nor did they become a part of some curriculum. He surmises that "much may have been lost when the city was sacked in 1565 but works of major court poets and personalities do survive". He expresses his curiosity in learning why these survived at all.

1.2.5 He reasons that much was written with "vital literary energies" in the vernaculars. He compares the two *Bhārata-s* that were created viz. the Kannada production of Kumāravyāsa, which did not receive any royal patronage, and the Sanskrit production of Divākara, which did. The former was quite popular, while the latter lay mostly unread[2].

1.2.6 He then examines the titles that Kṛṣṇadevarāya had – *kāvya-nāṭaka-marmajña, kavitā-prāvīṇya-phaṇīśa and sakala-kalā-bhoja* – and mentions the *Jāmbavatī-pariṇaya* that Rāya composed as being much praised by the erudite scholars who were present for its performance (p 402). He gives a brief sketch of the story which is originally from *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and goes on to critique that there is nothing new literarily in the adaptation. However, he finds that this work is of interest to him because of how this fits, according to him, the political narrative of Vijayanagara Empire.

The play in Sanskrit (with the female characters therein using the Prakrit language) is as usual, but the Sanskrit was no longer associated with sacredness ("sacrality...associated with Sanskrit had been neutralized centuries before", to cite Pollock). So he considers the question as to why Kṛṣṇadevarāya chose to compose in Sanskrit while the vernacular was the more powerful. His conclusion is that the *kāvya* is "profoundly historicist-political" – more so than the previously composed *carita-s, vijaya-s* and *abhyudaya-s* that gave poetic accounts of military conquests; and for the reason that it was so closely tied to the history of its day, it ceased to be of interest at a later date.

1.2.7 He concludes with the note that Sanskrit as a mode of personal expression was on its death-bed, and what it could express was only the concerns of the empire. So, when the empire disappeared, that sounded, he says, the death knell for Sanskrit as well.

1.3 Mughal Court

1.3.1 Choosing an individual for anecdotal evidence (rather than a period as he does in the aforesaid cases) Pollock calls Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja (circa 17th century CE) (Sarma 1994:6-8) "the Last Sanskrit Poet", and embarks on tracing his life and times ("very close to us in time, and yet we have almost as little concrete evidence about him as we have about the fourth-century master Kālidāsa" (Pollock 2001:404)).

1.3.2 In Pollock's opinion, the output of Jagannātha in his capacity of a court poet is much like any other court poet's. *Rasagaṅgādhara*, Jagannātha's famous work on Alaṅkāra-śāstra, has all "the same assumptions, procedures and goals" as its predecessors in the field (implying it has added nothing new to the space). Likewise do the "panegyrics to the kings of Udaipur and Delhi and Assam which remain largely indistinguishable from centuries of such productions" (Pollock 2001:404).

1.3.3 However, Pollock says "one senses in his lyrics and even in his scholarly works some very new sensibility, which...might fairly be called a modern subjectivity" (2001:404-405). Tracing the story of Jagannātha - of breaking away from orthodoxy and falling in love with a Muslim woman, and finally ending his life by drowning in the Gaṅgā - Pollock asserts : "Something very old died when Jagannātha died, and also something very new."

1.3.4 He then brings in the data about paṇḍits who called themselves '*navya*' and presented works with new terminology, style, and modes of analysis that was radically different from the earlier ones. He however raises a question as to whether this radical change was merely a question of details or whether it pertained to the structure. Recounting the works of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara, and Gāgā Bhaṭṭa, he also draws attention to the change of the political scenario of the time viz. the rise of Maratha power.

1.3.5 He then talks of how the past and the present (i.e. mid-17th century CE) subtly but clearly got separated though there was no overt schism between the "*prācya*" and "*navya*". To look at the socio-political milieu of scholarship, Pollock picks up two traditional scholars viz. Siddhicandra (1587–1666 CE), a Jain monk in the court of Akbar and Jahangir, and Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī (1600–75), a leading *paṇḍit* of Vārāṇasī – and contrasts them with Jagannātha.

1.3.6 Siddhicandra, a man of great personal beauty and for that reason a favourite with the two Mughal emperors, was a Jain monk. He has written an autobiography which is the basis for the conclusions drawn by Pollock. Writing about the general socio-political atmosphere of the day, Pollock paints it as being very open to new ideas. The evidence forwarded are : the writings of Abul Fazal and the attitudes of Akbar himself; large scale translations that were happening from Sanskrit to Persian; Mughal courtiers like Abdur Rahim who were themselves experimenting with writing in Sanskrit; and lastly, Sanskrit intellectuals, including young Siddhicandra, who were learning Persian.

Even with such exposure to cosmopolitan life, the writings of Siddhicandra stay, according to Pollock, intellectually at the 12th century instead of in the 17th century. In his *Kāvyaprakāśa-khaṇḍana*, critiquing Mammaṭa's work, he calls himself '*navya*' and yet the intellectual content is the same (Pollock 2001:406). Pollock generalizes next about the "newness" of the "new" intellectuals:

> "They certainly strove for ever greater precision and sophistication of definition and analysis (in imitation, in fact, of the New Logic), but these matters of style were far more striking than any substantive innovation...

> Beyond such innovations in analytic idiom, however, what may be most importantly new here is the self-proclaimed newness itself, and its intimation that the past is somehow passed, even if it will not go completely away." (Pollock 2001:407)

1.3.7 Turning his attention to Siddhicandra's autobiography (which Pollock sees as centering around Siddhicandra's celebration of his maintenance of the traditional moral vision of his own self) Pollock expatiates on the "dramatic core" of the text. To sum it up, it is how the king and queen try to persuade Siddhicandra to renounce his celibacy, and how steadfast Siddhicandra is in his adherence to his monastic vows. Pollock finds it "especially suggestive of the nature of Sanskrit literary culture at this moment that all innovation—the narrative and literary and discursive novelty—should be in service of the oldest of Jain monastic ideals" (Pollock 2001:407).

1.3.8 Next comes Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī in whom, Pollock bewails, even radical alteration of social environment produced no commensurate transformation of cultural vision. The scholar earned fame for persuading Shah Jahan from levying jizya tax on the pilgrims to Varanasi and Prayag. He was patronized by Prince Dara Shikoh and later accompanied the French traveller François Bernier for over three years. Yet, his literary production, according to Pollock, was very conventional: his Sanskrit work was, glossorial and hymnal while his Hindi production was of greater value. He also owned a big library (> 2000 manuscripts) (which was probably due to the pension from the Mughal emperor, Pollock is so quick to point out).

With this, Pollock comes to the judgement part :"What Sanskrit learning in the seventeenth century prepared one best to do, one might infer from the lives and works of Siddhicandra and Kavīndra, was to resist all other learning." (Pollock 2001:408)

1.3.9 The contrast by way of Jagannātha is presented next. He too had similar exposure to cosmopolitan life; he too enjoyed the patronage of Dara Shikoh like Kavīndrācārya. But, Pollock points out, the effect of these on Jagannātha's literary production was different – that Jagannātha got inspirations from vernacular texts. Unlike Siddhicandra who was steadfast in his celibacy, Jagannātha had a personal life where he was linked to a Muslim woman. Pollock sees the verses written by Jagannātha regarding this beloved as being like nothing else before or after. He forwards the opinion that it was all because Jagannātha's poetry was informed by Persian literature through social interactions, and that this is a manifestation of the theme of the ever-unattainable '*mahbūb*', the unattainability exaggerated by ethnic difference.

Similarly, Jagannātha introduces a personal tone in his scholarly as well as poetic works, Pollock opines. Be it responding to the scholar who insulted his guru, or providing demonstrative examples for various tropes in his *Rasa-gaṅgādhara*, Jagannātha brings in an individual element. Pollock asseverates that though other poets earlier have shown individuality and projected distinctive selves, there is "still something new in what Jagannātha is doing". Jagannātha writes about "the death of his child", while no one has written of such personal sorrow before.

Pollock however cedes that there is difficulty in painting a naive picture of Jagannātha putting out his emotions thus – that there is inconsistency in merging the emotional poet who is venting his lament in the poem, and the detached scholar who is clinically dissecting the same poem in *Rasa-gaṅgādhara*. Pollock admits that he is stumped with "the discontinuities in Jagannātha's poetry and theory". He considers the possible explanations – that Jagannātha considered it inauspicious to have written about the death of his wife; and are we not supposed to consider them "the expressions of his true self?"; that he had forgotten that these were the verses on the death of his wife. Pollock discards all these possibilities and concludes that the philological method, by way of critically editing *Bhāminīvilāsa*, is the only way to analyse this. "Or did a stupid editor mix verses up after Jagannātha's death?" – Pollock muses.

He concludes that the greatest Sanskrit literary critic and poet of the age composed verses on the death of his wife, who happened to be a Muslim – and even if it was not Jagannātha who wrote those verses, whoever wrote those did a 'first' in Sanskrit. This newness, he says, "was born - and died".

1.4 Bengal

1.4.1 For the fourth period, Pollock gives a report that the British Raj did of the census of institutions of learning in Bengal. While students who studied various *śāstra*-s in the 353 Sanskrit schools were all brahmins, those studying Persian at Muslim schools had a mixture of Hindu and Muslim students of whom a fraction were brahmins. The curricula at the Sanskrit schools which popularly taught Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa and other *śāstra*-s with some students pursuing literature, had texts from 4th to 12th centuries, and only one work from contemporary Bengal.

1.4.2 Even though a lot of Sanskrit literature was being produced, no *kāvya* situated itself, Pollock says, in the world of early colonialism, whereas Nyāya tradition thrived by addressing the issues at hand (Viśvanātha Tarkapañcānana's *Siddhānta-muktāvalī* reorganized received wisdom and found acceptance all over the subcontinent). Hence Pollock concludes that the network which worked with Sanskrit intellectuals across the nation was intact but no one inserted literary texts into this network (hence they were not worth inserting). He points out that Sanskrit imagination saw nothing new even when the production of literature was thriving. Be it in Tanjore or Jaipur or Mysore, the court-patronized productions never left the court, and the court-produced literature ceased to make history.

1.4.3 Pollock notes that whatever was necessary to impact people even outside of literature, be it the struggles against Christian missionizing or the anti-colonial pamphlets of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (who was the founder of the Calcutta Sanskrit College), it was the vernacular that was used. Hence, Pollock says, Sanskrit can hardly be called alive if it was not a 'vehicle for living thought'.

1.4.4 Pollock's final word on this is: Yes, Sanskrit paṇḍits aspire to create a literary-cultural realm where Kālidāsa would have been at home; someone who does not have this 2000-year legacy (such as William Adam who conducted the aforementioned census in the 1830s) will not feel the weight of dead poets and scholars still being quite alive for them. But there is no point wasting criticism on them like Adam did. All the things that Adam criticized about the culture are actually central values of Sanskrit literature, which can only be appreciated by those who have the necessary cultural training.

However, Pollock asserts that the question is actually why and when Sanskrit literature became a practice of repetition and not renewal, and why the capacity to reimagine the world was lost to Sanskrit for ever.

1.5 Conclusions

1.5.1 That there can be no straightforward narrative to fit the above four moments into a plausible single historical narrative, Pollock readily recognizes; but he wants to recognize, in general terms, how a great tradition can die – implying that the *when* of the death of Sanskrit tradition is a given and is in the past, and that we only have to figure out the *how* and *why*.

1.5.2 He brings in the comparison with other dead languages like Greek and Latin. Greek is ruled out straightaway, but Pollock sees the later history of Latin as showing great similarities to that of Sanskrit. Slow death, first losing out as the vehicle of literary expression while continuing to be expression for learned discourse; periodic renewals or forced rebirths, sometimes connected with "politics of translocal aspiration"; the way it "ever more exclusively associated with narrow forms of religion and priestcraft, despite centuries of secular aesthetic" (Pollock 2001:415) – these points are common to both. The contrast is with regard to communicative competence which was lost for Latin with vernacularization, whereas Sanskrit continued to be known and studied - by the very people who promoted the vernaculars.

1.5.3 Acknowledging the difference between Latin and Sanskrit, he wants to locate the cause of the death of Sanskrit in the "South Asian historical experience". He dismisses outright the decline of Sanskrit culture with Islamic rule, saying that it is historically untenable even though the contemporary climate (implying the political atmosphere of today) favours the theory. It is his firm conviction that it was the "barbarous invader" who was trying to revive Sanskrit, while "a set of much long-term cultural, social, and political changes" caused the death.

1.5.4 Paraphrasing his thoughts on the last-mentioned changes: It was the court that took care of Sanskrit, and when there was internal enfeeblement there, it naturally affected Sanskrit. Then there was the competition between vernaculars and Sanskrit for recognition. These factors did not act in equal force everywhere. In Kashmir it took a toll on Sanskrit because of eroded ethos. By 13th century, before the Turkish rulers established themselves, it had already died and hence they can't be held responsible for it. In Vijayanagara, the literature produced was predictable and hollow. Anything which was literarily important was said in Telugu or, outside the court, in Kannada or Tamil. Those who didn't have such content wrote in Sanskrit and were never read. The same was the case in the North, where vernacular held the sway. Whatever was important and urgent had to be said in the vernacular and the cosmopolitan Sanskrit made less and less sense in this regional world.

1.5.5 Any structures that came to take collective action against incidents — like abuse of pilgrims, through sending petitions — never became institutionalized; instead they remained transitory, narrow goals. The "new" intellectuals had nothing new in substance to offer but only in style. No new idiom came to life to even articulate the new relationship with the past, forget critiquing it. No new knowledge, no new theory of religious, let alone political, identity was produced to reflect the changes that were being seen. No new creation of literature in a sustained manner came to be.

Pollock ends this with

> "the mental and social spheres of Sanskrit literary production grew ever more constricted, and the personal and this-worldly, and eventually even the presentist-political, evaporated, until only the dry sediment of religious hymnology remained... At all events, the fact remains that well before the consolidation of colonialism, before even the establishment of the Islamicate political order, the mastery of tradition had become an end in itself for Sanskrit literary culture, and reproduction, rather than revitalization, the overriding concern... In the field of power of the time, the production of Sanskrit literature had become a paradoxical form of life where prestige and exclusivity were both vital and terminal.'
>
> (Pollock 2001:417-418)

2 Analysis of the "analysis"

Pollock's acclaim as a Sanskritist leads one to expect a dispassionate presentation of facts and deductions in the subject. However he catches the reader's attention in the very first paragraph by his overtly political tone in contextualizing his writing. He describes the 'Hindutva' forces which have captured power and are bent on presenting distorted pictures of the past to the masses, essentially changing the narrative which has been set in the past decades.

In this section, we take specific points from the summary above for analysis, and group logically linked points even if they are chronologically apart. Due to fear of prolixity, we will not do detailed analyses of all the points. Where necessary, we shall be referring to the point summed up in the synopsis in section B.

2.1 What is the purpose of knowledge?

In a culture that defines the four valid goals of life – *dharma, artha, kāma*, and *mokṣa*– and where the first three are to be subservient to the last one (even though the fourth is sometimes subsumed under the first), everything is aligned to the last of the *puruṣārtha*-s, however mediated the link.

The only thing that needs to be done for its own sake is, according to our tradition, the preservation of the Veda-s. As Patañjali says '*brāhmaṇena niṣkāraṇaḥ vedaḥ saṣaḍaṅgo 'dhyeyo jñeyaś ca*'(*Mahābhāṣya*, Paspaśāhnika) [For a *brāhmaṇa*, one whose principal pursuit is knowledge, the Veda-s along with all the six Vedāṅga-s, are to be studied and understood for no putative reason whatsoever]. This is so since the Veda-s are considered to be the first manifestation of the Ultimate Truth whose knowledge leads to *mokṣa*. Hence, even the *niṣkāraṇa* part of Patañjali's quote refers to doing so with no eye on worldly gain.

Everything is done for the sake of putting us on the path to this final goal– even *kāma* in its right place, and within bounds leads to that. Each point in time is linked to this ultimate goal, from before birth to beyond death (*niṣekādi-smaśānāntaḥ: Manusmṛti* 2.16), and all key actions take the form of *yajña*-s. Even the consumption of food is linked to the ultimate goal:

> *āhārārthaṁ karma kuryād anindyaṁ /*
> *kuryād āhāraṁ prāṇa-sandhāraṇārtham* |
> *prāṇās sandhāryās tattva-vijñāna-hetos /*
> *tattvaṁ jñeyaṁ yena bhūyo na janma* || (*cf Bhāgavata* 11.18.34)

[Translation (ours): Take up a blameless profession for the sake of earning your food; partake of food but to sustain life; sustain life in order to know the Truth; and know that Truth as a consequence of which one is no more subject to rebirth]

Everyone is linked in a hierarchical manner to follow the leader, the pursuer of knowledge, so that each person is aligned to a path of his/her choice (*sve sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ saṁsiddhiṁ labhate naraḥ* - *Bhagavadgītā* 18.45) which ultimately leads to the Summum Bonum.

Even the *kāvya* is a part of educating oneself to align in the right direction. Called *kāntā-saṁmita*, it is a part of the system to hand values to the people (the other two being the Veda-s and Purāṇa-s).

2.2 The Measure of Vitality

Pollock's narrow definition of what is a measure of the vitality of a language - viz. *kāvya*-s of a certain calibre and type - excludes a lot of different types of literature (*stotra* literature, for example) which together contribute to making a literary culture vibrant. He also gauges the 'death' or 'enfeebled' nature of the Sanskritic culture, by the non-production of any new theories in literary criticism (noted above in 1.1.1).

In such a framework of the four-fold values of life, as defined above, there is no work 'for its own sake' or 'for the sake of mere pleasure'. Even pleasure can be of the right sort or the wrong sort (as *kāma* finds its place in both the four *puruṣārtha*-s and the *ari-ṣaḍ-varga*, the set of six [internal] foes) and this imposes a certain criterion for it to be a valid goal. Hence '*ars gratia artis*' ('Art for art's sake') has never really found currency in the traditional Indian scenario (Coomaraswamy 2011:40).

When Pollock criticizes the lack of any theory of literary criticism (see 1.1.1 above) designed to oppose or replace the one which was presented before the 12th century CE, we need to examine if there indeed was any need for such an upheaval. When the *Rasa* Theory and the *Dhvani* Theory came to be presented in fairly refined forms, the scholars could only debate on certain details of the theory, they must have felt no need to come up with something completely new and revolutionary simply to displace the established ones. Where a necessity was felt through experimentation and experience to debate the veracity of a point (as in philosophy), there has been no undue reverence shown simply because it is a long-established idea of a respected saint or scholar[3].

The point to be understood here is that the tradition has always respected scholars for their ideas; however, when some lack is felt i.e., where theory fails to explain the experience, the debates have gone on relentlessly forward[4]. Of course, the human element of some personal rivalries and prejudices do reveal themselves, but the primary concern has been being more dispassionate than anything else[5]. By taking but one narrow section of the knowledge spectrum, only erroneous conclusions can be reached.

When Pollock talks of the paradoxes he sees in the Sanskrit literature produced during the Vijayanagara period, or laments the lack of literature in the pre-colonial Bengal (see 1.2.3, 1.4.2 above), he has again put on the lens of what according to him constitutes a thriving literary culture. Ignoring significant portions of literature such as the detailed *bhāṣya* that Sāyaṇa produced on all the four Veda-s; dismissing the same as mere scholarship of the reproductive type without any originality[6]; mentioning the exciting works happening in Nyāya while saying in the same breath that Sanskrit culture was dead – *this* indeed is the real paradox.

The point Pollock makes, stated in (1.1.2) above, suffers again from focussing on a narrow range (viz. *kāvya*) of a very vast spectrum of literature, of which *kāvya* forms a small part after all as against the total intellectual output. Pollock has conveniently defined the parameters at the very outset to suit his own projections. Hanneder (2002: 302-303) shows how this argument does not hold water since there are evidences of works which are superficially *stuti-s* (and hence disqualified as per Pollock's criteria), but also express the religious developments in the Kashmir valley.

The significance of the works in Sanskrit produced during the Vijayanagara period (see 1.2.4 supra) is measured (Pollock 2001:401) on the basis of whether they drew the attention of any commentator (curiously, and strangely, he does not consider production of a commentary to be a 'valid' measure of the vitality of a linguistic culture; for, had it been so, he could hardly have glossed over Sāyaṇa's massive commentarial work).

2.3 Statistical inexactitudes

While Pollock emphasizes the good effect of the rule of the Sultan Zain-ul-'abidin (see 1.1.2 supra) in that he promoted Sanskrit literature production, and also emphasizes how the bad Hindu kings before that were the epitomes of degeneracy, he fails to mention the other side of the picture – viz. the maladministration of Muslim rulers in general, as too the good patronage given by most Hindu rulers. In fact, this is one of the ruling features we see in his writings - where one witnesses a systematic underplay of the negative effects of Islamic rule coupled with an over-emphasis of the little good done by them, while at the same time doing the exact opposite in respect of Hindu rulers. This is elaborated upon in the next sub-section.

And as Hanneder points out (2002:308), terming Jagannātha as "the last Sanskrit poet" is not warranted as there are works such as those of the acclaimed Ambikādatta Vyāsa, the *mahākāvya* of the Nepali scholar Sukṛtidatta Panta, and the writings of Kṣamā Rao, amongst a host of others (for more details, see Hanneder 2002:309).

2.4 List-and-dismiss

Even great jeopardies – such as the loss of valuable texts - by fires that destroyed libraries in Kashmir (1.1.3 above) find but a very casual mention in his writings, as evidenced in the following sentence:

> "important creative texts may have disappeared, perhaps in one of the fires that periodically engulfed the capital of Kashmir, or in the Mongol invasion of 1320, which, according to a sixteenth-century Persian chronicle, left the country in ruins. Texts may simply have eluded the notice of modern editors however carefully they may have combed the manuscript collections of Kashmir. But none of these possibilities seems very likely."
>
> Pollock (2001:398)

After listing out the possibilities of the existential threats that had faced the Kashmiris, it is all dismissed with the last sentence, without giving any sensible reason. The one 'reason' given is that important Sanskrit literature, particularly literary theory, used to disseminate out of Kashmir, and nothing of the sort has happened during the period.

If we consider in general the destruction caused by Islamic invasion from the perspective of the literary activities of any period, the greatest would be the destruction of libraries even though the loss of the life of the scholars is no less tragic. The former, however, would mean the loss of generations of cumulative learning and creation.

Just taking one instance in the same *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Śrīvara, we come across the following verse (1.5.75):

sekandhara-dharānātho yavanaiḥ preritaḥ purā |
pustakāni ca sarvāṇi tṛṇāny agir ivādahat ||

[Translation (our own): Instigated earlier by *yavana*-s (Muslims), Sikandar, the sultan, burnt down all the books - just as fire would burn down grass.]

The period being talked about is that of Sikandar But-shikhan (which means 'Sikandar the Destroyer of Idols') (1389-1413 CE), regarding whom Śrīvara wrote (ref. Syed et al. 2011:282).

However, each of the 'not-very-likely' reasons that he has listed must have caused a great deal of instability in the normal life, which would undoubtedly affect any scholarly output that might have been possible at the time. Also, of the fires "that engulfed the capital" of Kashmir, one must of necessity ask - what was their cause? That was the period of the beginning of Islamic occupation - isn't it then a part of the conflict and invasion? Śrīvara himself talks of the literature in *deśa-bhāṣā* which is Persian rather than Kashmiri; doesn't this point to a large-scale conversion? These are some of the questions that arise in the light of the claims made by Pollock. More work would be required if we are to find further/clearer answers.

In the case of Vijayanagara (1.2.4 above) too, the result of an Islamic invasion is downplayed considerably as in the case of Kashmir (1.1.3 above). The destruction that Vijayanagara saw after the battle of Talikota in 1565 marks a civilizational break (ref. Eaton 2005:100). Sewell writes that the fallen capital was ruthlessly pillaged and destroyed for five months (Sewell 1962:200).

2.5 Parsimony in applying Ockham's Razor!

While Pollock sees nothing new in content in either *Rasagaṅgādhara* or the *vilāsa*-s of Jagannātha (1.3.2 above), he submits that there is still something novel akin to the 'modern subjectivity' (Pollock 2001:405). He asserts (1.3.3 above) that it is Jagannātha's personal story of love and the loss of the beloved etc., which have been voiced in *Bhāminīvilāsa*, while most other scholars do not even raise this question of whether there is something personal about this at all. It is just considered to be a work which is nothing but a collection of independent verses - by no means unusual in Sanskrit literature.

The four sections of *Bhāminīvilāsa* – Anyokti-vilāsa, Śṛṅgāra-vilāsa, Karuṇā-vilāsa, Śānta-vilāsa – have various poems arranged in the typical *muktaka* style (ref. Lienhard 1984:103). While Pollock talks of Karuṇā-vilāsa as being reflective of Jagannātha's personal bereavement, and tries hard to explain away the discrepancy between the emotionality of Jagannātha the poet and the detachment of Jagannātha the critic, one finds it easier to take the poem as just that – a poem which has come from the imagination of a great poet, rather than any portrayal of personal tragedies.

Is it not the first quality of a great poet to be able to portray his (imaginary) characters show emotions that are realistic? Does it not issue from the *pratibhā* (genius) of the poet? When we come across Kālidāsa's Aja bemoaning in First Person the death of his beloved wife (ref. *Raghuvaṁśa* Canto 8), are we to construe it as Kālidāsa's personal grief coming through? The hair-splitting analysis made in order to explain away these superimposed discontinuities in Jagannātha's theory and practice seems at best to be an exercise in futility.

2.6 Perhaps...probably...and therefore

Jagannātha's link with a Muslim woman seems for Pollock, to be the sole qualifying factor for the "something new" in his poetry (1.3.9 above)! While no one disputes the existence of poetry in Persian regarding the unattainable love (though Pollock emphasizes, that it is so on counts of ethnic difference), through ages we find in our own literature here, verses dwelling on this theme. Famous in the category is *Caura-pañcāśikā* of Bilhaṇa (circa 11th c.CE), where Bilhaṇa, a commoner, falls in love with the princess. As for the personal tone, many works post-12th century (or even prior ones, though it is difficult to demarcate the transition) talk of their creator's prowess, bring the personal element to 'crush' the opponent etc (e.g. *Madhva-tantra-mukha-mardanam* of Appayya Dīkṣita (16th c.CE)). This 'cosmopolitan' change in Jagannātha - that he broke the conventions, unlike Siddhicandra who remained celibate - again seems to be the driving point of seeing something new in his work. Can't it suffice that Jagannātha was a truly brilliant poet (while Siddhicandra might not have been) and should it take a breaking of taboo to make his brilliant poetry brilliant? Praising a truly great scholar for the wrong reasons is worse than "damnation by faint praise". It would be akin to saying *Mahābhārata* is truly great because it was written by the son of a fisherwoman.

In sum, by making an assumption that a disputed conjecture is indeed a fact i.e. that *Bhāminīvilāsa* is but a personal narrative and that it is about his beloved who was a Muslim, and trying to explain the inconsistencies in the points of view of Jagannātha in his poetic and scholarly works, Pollock is discarding simple and plausible explanations, in favour of complicated and highly unlikely speculations.

2.7 Selection of data

After considering specific kingdoms (viz. Kashmir and Vijayanagara) in the earlier two anecdotal samples, that he has chosen to consider now an individual (viz. Jagannātha) for analysis as the third (1.3.1 above) is rather telling. Taking specific geographic locations in Bhārata in order to arrive at the life (or death) of a pan-Bhārata language is not logically sound, unless it is established *a priori* that the sample he is considering is truly representative of the whole (via *sthālī-pulāka-nyāya*).

2.7.1 Spatial dimension of the problem:

One basic problem that we see in the anecdotal samples that are analysed to arrive at the conclusions in the paper, is the inherent contradiction between - (i) considering Sanskrit on the one hand as having pan-Indian (or pan-South Asian) reach and (ii) not considering the entire area of Greater India or rather Bhāratavarṣa, at the four specific time periods that are being considered[7]. If one focuses on a particular geographic area where conditions may or may not be conducive for cultural life to thrive (as in the case of Kashmir during the invasion of Islamic forces, or the case of Vijayanagara after the Battle of Talikota in 1565), one is bound to see such 'deaths'. On the contrary, if one looks at the entire Bhāratavarṣa as the locus of literary activity, we can see how Sanskrit is alive rather than being 'dead'.

After all, it was a common practice for scholars to move from kingdom to kingdom. (*svadeśe pūjyate rājā; vidvān sarvatra pūjyate*, as the adage goes). Pollock himself mentions the ease with which Jagannātha moved from court to court, "from Andhra to Jaipur to Delhi and from Udaipur to Assam in a kind of vast "circumambulation of the quarters"" (Pollock 2001:404). To see Bhāratavarṣa as merely a collection of pieces of land that were kingdoms or *janapada*-s, and nothing more, would be a grave injustice to the land which is truly the cradle of an ancient and steady civilization.

2.7.2 Temporal dimension of the problem:

There are problems in choosing and considering specific slivers of time, in the long history of a language to gauge such a thing as its vitality. Such a situation obtains especially against a "problem" which is rather exclusive to the Indian civilization viz. one of the tendency for self-effacement. As Coomaraswamy (2004:175) points out, the artist is usually anonymous and it is always what is said, and not who said it, that mattered.

While this is an excellent philosophy, it does make things extremely difficult in a scenario such as we face in the present age, where historicity of all aspects of literature matters, what with the history-centricity that is being thrust on us. (The reason for the emphasis is not hard to fathom – since the secularism which finds wide currency in today's scholarship has its roots in the Abrahamic tradition which is deeply or rather essentially history-centric) (ref. Malhotra 2011, Ch.2) . In our eventful several millennia of history, forget the absolute dating of a poet/philosopher (to locate him/her, to wit, in the grid of a linear timeline) and locating him/her in a probable geography - even relatively placing them sees too many difficulties more often than not. Commonly, it is the mention of the reigning king that helps in placing the scholar on the time line (though even that is fraught with difficulties since there can be disputes in dating the king himself, as there can be several namesakes of a king in different periods/ages). A lot of different kinds of internal evidences will have to be consulted in the absence of external evidences, in order to deduce a possible time range. For instance, in the case of Kālidāsa, assignments of date ranges from 1 century BCE to 8th century CE, and with no definite idea about his place. What is worse, confusion gets confounded with multiple scholars or poets bearing the same name.

2.7.3 Numerical dimension of the problem

kati kavayaḥ, kati kṛtayaḥ, kati luptāḥ, kati caranti, kati śithilāḥ |
tad api pravartayati māṁ nigamoktākhyāna-saṁvidhāne hā ||

If we consider the number of works produced (encompassing all genres of writing from *kāvya* to *bhāṣya* to independent works on the various sciences) , only a fraction probably were reproduced in the manuscript form – due to various reasons such as lessening interest in the subject, natural calamities, invasions, economic conditions etc. The major reason for the losses of the ones actually created is actually destruction of libraries. Of even that fraction, it is only a further fraction that survives till date – thanks to the tropical weather, ignorance in the families where they are preserved etc. Hundreds of Sanskrit texts are available only in Tibetan translation. Of the surviving ones, even if we have some information of more than half of them, there are according to the census, over 30 million manuscripts.

> Sanskrit is the primary culture-bearing language of India, with a continuous production of literature in all fields of human endeavor over the course of four millennia. Preceded by a strong oral tradition of knowledge transmission, records of written Sanskrit remain in the form of inscriptions dating back to the first century B.C.E. Extant manuscripts in Sanskrit number over 30 million - one hundred times those in Greek and Latin combined - constituting the largest cultural heritage that any civilization has produced prior to the invention of the printing press. Sanskrit works include extensive epics, subtle and intricate philosophical, mathematical, and scientific treatises, and imaginative and rich literary, poetic, and dramatic texts. (Goyal *et al* 2012:1012)

The number of surviving manuscripts being that large, it is difficult to imagine the size of the corpus had all the works survived.

When we look at only one particular genre such as *kāvya*[8], if the numbers we are considering are even a third, hypothetically, of the total corpus available now considering the profusion of *kāvya* literature that has been produced, there are still so many in that number which haven't even seen the light of the day[9]. There would then be 10 million of the *kāvya* manuscripts. If even a fourth of all the manuscripts ever produced have survived till date, the total number of manuscripts originally produced would be 4 times 30million, i.e. 120 million (another hypothetical number). Even if one factors in the repetitions (50 mss for each *kāvya*), it would come to 5 lakh *kāvya*-s. If this number is to be representative of the corpus that was originally produced, one sees the difficulty of extending a deduction or a conclusion from this fraction to the original whole.

We are also aware, to but a very small extent, of the losses. Many anthologies have eulogising verses that mention poets by name. In a play of Kālidāsa we find the mention of Bhāsa, Saumilla and Kaviputra[10]. For centuries together, scholars had merely heard of Bhāsa, with none of his works being available. It was only in the beginning of the 20th century that Bhāsa's works were traced (see Sastri 1925). And we still do not have any inkling as to who Saumilla was or what Kaviputra wrote. Likewise there are so many poetesses who are known only by the appearance of their *muktaka*-s in anthologies. Same is the case even of great writers in *śāstra*-s such as Bhaṭṭa Tauta (the guru of Abhinavagupta, and the author of *Kāvya-kautuka-vivaraṇa* which has not been traced) and Kauṭalya (a.k.a Cāṇakya, the author of *Arthaśāstra*, which was discovered only in the early 20th century).

It is often argued that if a work has not survived, it is because it did not have ideas that were worthy/capable of surviving. It is a very dangerous argument to make, for, this can be used as an explanation for any work disappearing from circulation, accidentally or deliberately, for various reasons[11]. When one is trying to base one's conclusions on mere negative evidence one must bear all these problems in mind[12] and recall the oft-quoted statement of wisdom, viz. "Absence of evidence is by no means an evidence of absence". In the case at hand, simply because we haven't found yet manuscripts of a specific genre and/or from a specific period, we are by no means entitled to conclude that there weren't any books written – particularly in a civilization such as ours which shows such remarkable continuity and redoubtable zeal in knowledge production. All that one may conclude is – "We do not have any data from this period to theorize". On a lighter note, one remembers Sherlock Holmes saying to his trusted Watson "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have data". But unlike Holmes who cried out, "Data! Data! I cannot make bricks without clay!" – some scholars can apparently pull off this veritable magic!

3 Meta-analysis and pattern recognition

In this section we try to recognize certain patterns of reasoning that emerge from reading (between the lines as well) the article of Pollock.

(a) **Choosing a narrow definition to determine the vitality of a tradition/language:** Choosing only that *kāvya*-genre which according to Pollock is representative of 'creative vitality', he completely neglects the other genres of literature produced, including (a) the very substantial glosses by giants of scholars like Sāyaṇa, (b) *stotra* literature, and (c) scientific literature (ref. Hanneder 2002:298-99), to list but three.

(b) **Selecting data to fit a theory:** He cites Jonarāja's listing of no poets, no good works in the period of 140 years. He mentions that the presence of Turks as insignificant. However, he fails to mention the havoc wreaked by Sikandar Butshikhan who is mentioned by Śrīvara (see Kaul 2001:231,233 and Haig 1918:454,455). Such cherry-picking of facts can only lead to a distorted picture.

(c) **Selective playing-up and playing-down:** We find instances of his playing down the great genocides, invasions etc that happened with the coming of the Muslim invaders (see 1.1.3, 1.2.4 above). He plays up the rare good things e.g. the donation that was given by a Muslim to a temple here, a scholar supported there, and a good Sultan somewhere else – in order to project a picture of a very benevolent rule (e.g. the rule of Zain-ul-'abidin) while not citing the enormous destruction caused (e.g. libraries burnt by Sikandar). His general claim is that Muslim rulers tried to save the language and were benevolent (Pollock 2001:416) which is contradicted by other records (ref. Bostom 2008:458-460). On the contrary, every case of a 'bad' Hindu ruler is projected as though it is a representative sample of 'bad' Hindu rule, while not choosing to look at the benevolent Hindu rulers and their contributions. This can be summed up with a new rule – *meyādhīnā mānasiddhiḥ* (Let us choose such tools and measures as suit the conclusions we want to portray!)

(d) **Using various terms/frameworks of social science, modern psychology, anthropology, Biblical studies etc to superim-**

pose on traditional Indian thought. The traditional scholars who are ignorant of other modern fields and the various theories therein are completely confounded and awed into submission to Pollock's methodology. There are inherent problems of using vocabulary and frameworks of fields of study *completely alien* to Sanskrit studies. (For instance, *Wirkungsgeschichte* (See Pollock 2001:393) is a term in Biblical studies coined by Gadamer for the hermeneutic principle of "history of effects". It means that a text is understood by taking account the effects it has produced in history, by inserting oneself in this history and dialoguing with it. See Eberhard 2004:90)

(e) **List and dismiss:** Enumerating the possible causes for a particular event (lest an opponent point out that all causes were not considered) but dismissing them without really giving even as much as substantial reason, saying no more than that they are 'not very likely'. We see this in 1.1.3 and 1.2.4, to give but two examples.

(f) ***Divida et impera:*** Though trying to deduce the fate of a pan-Bhārata language, his focus is on specific kingdoms and *janapada*-s and not Bhāratavarṣa, in order to declare its death in each case. To show an apparent conflict between Sanskrit and vernaculars, he pits the production and popularity of vernacular literature against that of Sanskrit literature, drawing conclusions, and colouring them with politics.

4 Conclusion

The work under scrutiny opens our eyes to the effort that has gone into a study of our literature and culture, the intentions notwithstanding. For a true debate to even begin, there needs to be an earnest effort from the insiders of this culture under scrutiny to come up with a faithful *pūrva-pakṣa* so that further efforts can be directed at coming up with a competent *uttarapakṣa*. There are several areas which require work in order to do the latter. We indicate a few here:

(a) There are inherent contradictions across Pollock's writings which need to be investigated and critiqued. For instance, Hanneder (2002:302) points to the contention that Śrīvara's work is almost "clerical" (1.1.2). He underlines the conflicting opinion of Pollock himself about Śrīvara who is "the most interesting intellectual at the court of Zain-ul-'abidin" and yet "unable to create serious original work himself". Also, his stand about the influence of Islamic forces as pointed out by Rajiv Malhotra (2016:285-286)

(b) That very little promotion was done by King Kṛṣṇadevarāya for Kannada literature production (which thrived outside) and that Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil received courtly patronage (even though the Sanskrit literature of the day failed to make impact) – is a deduction which can and ought to be questioned though only after being armed with apt and sufficient data. It is only after a very thorough collection of information regarding the literature of the time (without making selection of any specific genre at the collection stage itself) can one even begin to challenge the conclusion.

(c) In general, the question of how much literature (of all genres including scientific) was produced in any given period is something that cannot be easily answered given the complexity of circumstances. However, delving deep into the material that is actually available will itself probably lead to some concrete conclusions which are not arising out of emotion but are based on facts, against the questions raised in sections 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.5, 1.4.1.

Working along the lines suggested above, we should, hopefully, be in a position at some future date to reply to the issues raised. While it is necessary to attack the logic of Pollock's arguments, one needs to essentially abstain from resorting to polemics (even though that stand might not be reciprocated).

For a language which has supposedly *'died' so many times*, Sanskrit definitely has a way of returning to life – a veritable phoenix that it is! However, rather than qualifying the low points in its history as 'death', one can term it renewal or reconfiguration. This is because, unlike the other 'dead' languages, Sanskrit has a very dynamic and close relationship with the vernaculars which are in currency.

Hanneder (2002:309) rightly points to the essential cultural misunderstanding that Pollock displays when he repeatedly points to the 'death' of Sanskrit (whatever may be his measures). It is that here time is essentially cyclic and what was once an old style, renews itself and becomes current, whereas the Western mind essentially sees linear time - where the arrow moves in but a single direction, and 'culminating' in the present achievements. The Indian mind does more easily handle the idea of renewal than does a Western mind.

While we have only raised pertinent questions in this paper, we intend to produce sounder arguments against Pollock in a future context.

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Endnotes

[1] Pollock is very critical of *citrakāvya* genre but it takes undoubted authority on language to be able to write one. Hanneder (2002:300) comments on this (however, we cannot agree with his full substantiation) and points out that judging the literature over a very long period of time (like making a sweeping statement that after 1200s the literature is all of lesser quality) is problematic since other scholars can hold different opinions.

[2] The latter point presented rather dramatically as "the latter lay unread and unrecopied in the palace library from the moment the ink on the palm leaves was dry." (Pollock 2001:401)

[3] A parallel case in point would be the acceptance of Euclidean geometry for near two millennia (from 300BCE to around 19th century CE) until non-Euclidean geometry was discovered. (Kulczycki1956:53)

[4] The cropping up of the Advaita-Viśiṣṭādvaita-Dvaita traditions and further subdivisions thereof are cases in point.

[5] Famous is the Śaṅkara-Maṇḍanamiśra debate.

[6] For more details on the Sanskrit works produced in the Vijayanagara empire, see Krishnamachariar (1989)

[7] There is also the inconsistency pointed out by Hanneder (2002:295): While Pollock argues for the political function of Sanskrit, the area across which that was spread extended from present-day Afghanistan to present-day Indonesia (roughly 84 lakh sqkms), without a military conquest but through intellectuals and religious persons. Pollock (1995:231) also argues that Sanskrit was never a commoner's language. There is ample evidence to prove the contrary which shall be taken up in a later paper.

[8] The arbitrary choice of genres to determine if Sanskrit is alive or dead done where *stotra* is not considered a valid genre – this, according to Hanneder (2002:301), is only in line with the comparison with Latin literature.

[9] One has only to look at Pingree's *Census of the Exact Sciences in Sanskrit* to get an idea of how many scientific manuscripts have not been published yet.

[10] *...prathita-yaśasāṁ Bhāsa-Saumilla-Kaviputrādīnāṁ prabandhān atikramya vartamāna-kaveḥ Kālidāsasya kṛtau kathaṁ pariṣado bahumānaḥ* (*Mālavikāgnimitram* 1.1+)

[11] For instance, manuscripts could have been lost/stayed unpublished for any of the following reasons:

(a) Preferring only to study past masters rather than also encourage/preserve newer works.

(b) Possible repositories such as the university libraries getting destroyed in invasions/attacks

(c) Newer works not following the pattern of what is trending. But when a century or two later people somehow hear about it and are interested, no copies to be found.

(d) Manuscripts not surviving in the humid and hot tropical weather - what is the typical life expectancy of a manuscript in such climates? - if it is not copied and preserved, it is gone for ever

(e) Subsequent generations having lost the cultural connect with the manuscripts - dumping them in rivers or in the fire rather than allowing unregarding collectors to take it.

[12] The basic thesis of Pollock (1995) in his work "the Sanskrit Cosmopolis" is to portray Sanskrit as a tool for wielding political power through what he terms as 'aestheticization of power'. Hanneder (2002:297) points to the refutation that has already been written by Buhler on the matter (f14). In this thesis Pollock claims that Sanskrit lost its "political" function whereas in "the Death of Sanskrit" essay, he claims that Sanskrit lost its true life. The manuscripts available are from a period after Sanskrit has supposedly died. If one argues that those available are the elementary works and not the top-notch productions, the opponent can easily argue that you'll need the elementary works copied at a larger scale to be used for education across the nation, and cannot definitely be held up as "negative evidence" for lack of advanced works.

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Chapter 8

On "Death of Sanskrit"

– Manogna Sastry

Introduction

'The Death of Sanskrit' – the essay published under this rather astonishing title by the Indologist Sheldon Pollock (Pollock 2001) bids us to a dynamic re-examination and a defense of our invaluable literary instrument. The most august, venerable and determinative creations of the Indian race have been written in Sanskrit, and pronouncing death upon the language is tantamount to an inability in understanding the true role of this divine tongue. Pollock's essay merits a clear understanding of the burden of his song. The motives for the author's position and the method of his reasoning are studied here in order to understand why he would see efforts to promote the language as a politically biased "exercise in nostalgia". The distinction the author makes between living and dead languages and his attempts at placing Sanskrit in the latter category are closely examined. The four major questions the author considers as a part of his analysis in proclaiming death upon the language consist of the impact of the vernaculars upon Sanskrit, the political, social and spiritual components that played a role in the decline of the language and the factors he considers necessary for consolidating the language in today's times. Pollock cites four specific historical instances that apparently illustrate his stance and these are critically examined.

> India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an anglicised Oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the Occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma. – Sri Aurobindo

Whenever one endeavours to comprehend the value of a culture and appreciate, especially a culture into which he is born and forms the source of one's highest standards, he tends to gloss over the shortcomings and defects of his own heritage. At this juncture, it may prove helpful to have insights from an outsider to better one's reflection. For the outsider too, there are ways of perceiving an alien culture. There is, firstly, the sympathetic viewer and there are several foreigners who have embraced Indian culture and contributed enormously to its value, from Sister Nivedita to Romain Rolland. Then, there is the impartial and objective critic, who, without any prejudice in objective, balances the worth against the weakness and whose objective criticism must be welcomed to balance one's own study. The third is the belligerent critic, whose motives need to be carefully studied as well as his methods. And Sheldon Pollock lends himself to this third type. His overcharging declaration of the 'death' of Sanskrit summons a vigorous analysis and re-statement of the role of the language in present day India.

While Pollock's methods of analysis and recognition of the function of Sanskrit as the literary instrument of India reveals a conflict between Western and Asian approaches to understanding Oriental culture, his motives are revealed in the very first part of the essay. Pollock's bias against the recent attempts at revitalising Sanskrit is revealed through his disdain for efforts by the Indian government as well as private organizations here for promoting the language. He holds the rise of Hindutva and the election of the Bharatiya Janata Party to power at the central levels of government responsible for reviving a nationalistic culture. Efforts to promote the language independent of the Hindutva association that have been carried out in post independent India by several individuals and organizations are not given any credit. Pollock believes that this revival is driven by political motivations, and in the process, "distorted images of India's past" are being created including the viewpoint that Sanskrit is native to India and that it existed during the Indus Valley Civilization. He sets aside prevailing debates about the origin and geographical indigenousness of the language as well as discussions of the forms of Sanskrit during the latter part of the Harappan civilsation. Pollock further betrays his lack of recognition of the true role of Sanskrit in defining the identity of the Indian soul when he scorns any championing of the language by nationalistic elements, calling them "farcical repetition of Romantic myths of primevality".

Indeed, it is vitally important for a nation to be cautious in ensuring that exaggerated claims about its past are not made a part of its national narrative. Yet, the process of rediscovery and reinterpretation of the Indian identity that is currently taking place, in the context of globalised and liberalised policies at all levels of the State, finds the Indian of today looking back at his history without the coloured glasses of subjection that his colonial oppressor forced him to wear. It is very important for one to consider the state of the language and the field, leaving apart from the fringe elements who are occupying a small place. The number of people for whom Sanskrit is associated with the very template of the cultural fabric of India is far too big; and to dismiss this section by labeling and associating the campaign with only ultra-nationalistic elements amounts to closing the debate for the majority of the section. And Pollock assails this process of reinterpretation and growth, which is marked by a feature of self-assertive power, by calling it 'the State's anxiety' and condemns any effort that has gone into the preservation and propagation of the language as a part of a 'melancholic history.' Had this condemnation arisen from a lesser mind, it would have been forgivable. For a critic of Pollock's caliber, then, to question efforts in post independent India for the preservation and sharpening of the instrument in which the greatest canons of the land have been written, is but a pointer to the dubious and hostile motives of the man.

Pollock goes on to enlist the efforts that have gone into popularising Sanskrit since independence, and states that there have been hardly any results for all the funds and resources that have been allocated for the development of the language. While Pollock speaks about the political checks that he sees as being placed in this 'revisionism', he seems to be speaking of only one face of it. He makes no mention at all of how during the decades before the rise of the 'Hindutva', Sanskrit had to contend with the active State and governmental neglect. In 1994, attempts were made under the P V Narasimha Rao government to remove Sanskrit from the CBSE syllabus. It was the intervention of the Supreme Court that ended the Government's foolish move. The role played by these political and judicial checks in post independent India are not even discussed by Pollock while he maintains that any effort to revive the language is futile.

Having expressed his derision and disdain for the work done in promoting the language, especially as a spoken one, Pollock finally states the crux of his essay – "Government feeding tubes and oxygen tanks may try to preserve the language in a state of quasi-animation, but most observers would agree that, in some crucial way, Sanskrit is dead" (p. 393). When does one declare a language to be dead? In answering this question, Pollock does not establish any rigorous conditions but speaks of the distinction between written and natural languages. While admitting the influence of Sanskrit across Asia, he maintains that there have not been any theories on "whether and if so, when, Sanskrit culture ceased to make history", and why the language could not remain creatively vital.

A further study of the paper reveals that Pollock's definition of the 'death' of Sanskrit is primarily a reference to the dearth of production of creative works, especially in the domain of *kāvya*, over the last millennium. His method consists of singling out particular instances - over different periods of time spread over a thousand years and geographically scattered across the land - to support his thesis and overlooking those that invalidate it, pointing thus to a manner of biased scholarship. His consideration, of phases when emphasis was laid on documentation and "reinscription and restatement" as periods of decline and decay of the language, is debatable; and while doing so, Pollock conveniently casts away vitally important canons from these periods which readily disprove his thesis. Thus, Pollock's method of arbitrary selection drives his thesis from two major angles – (a) his exclusive focus on the genre of *kāvya* (excluding even *stotra-s*) as the only measure of the vitality of the language, and (b) his very small set of four instances spread over a millennium across the country during which the language declined.

In his study of the "history of Sanskrit knowledge systems," Pollock (2001:393) remarks that "the two centuries before European colonialism decisively established itself in the sub continent around 1750 constitute one of the most innovative epochs of Sanskrit systematic thought". Sanskrit thrived in India until then, according to him, with massive creative output in every major genre of the language. He does not make any reference at all to the effects of the Islamic invasion on the social and cultural fabric of the land and particularly on the linguistic scene. Yet, by 1800, the creative ability has disappeared from the land. Thus, according to Pollock, Sanskrit was alive enough to withstand all the shocks and turmoil the land had faced in the first half of the millennium to lead to the *Navya* movement but was dead within the next fifty years, by 1800. Calling this a momentous rupture, he admits the analysis of this sudden change is complex but himself selects only the genre of *kāvya* to study the decline in the language, quoting the Gujarati poet Dalpatrām Dahyabhai's work in 1857 as further evidence and highlights his case throughout the essay.

Without any analysis of the various roles Sanskrit has played in expressing the very psyche and mind of the Indian; without any recognition of the central role it has played in formulating some of the most profound spiritual, philosophical, intellectual and emotional conceptions of not just the Indian but of the human race; and by further not considering the various genres in which Sanskrit has continued to survive and thrive in India, Pollock's proclaiming death on the language on account of its no longer being the first language of the majority population in the country is contrived and purposeful overcharging. His carefully chosen examples that purportedly demonstrate the death of the language over the millennium consist of: (1) "The disappearance of Sanskrit literature in Kashmir," (2) "its diminished power in sixteenth century Vijayanagara," (3) "its short-lived moment of modernity at the Mughal court," and (4) "its ghostly existence in Bengal on the eve of colonialism." The four cases are duly considered in the following sections.

The four cases:

1 'The Lady Vanishes'

Pollock's first case consists in analyzing the decline, or rather in his own words, "the complete disappearance", of Sanskrit from Kashmir.

Pollock begins his case by considering the scene in the valley during 1140, a time during which Kashmir served as a celebrated and revered seat for the learning of the language. Alaṅkāra holds a gathering in honour of his brother Maṅkha, the author of the epic *Śrīkaṇṭhacarita.* The assembly hosts some of the greatest names in the field, from Ruyyaka, Maṅkha's mentor, to Trailokya and Jinduka. Kalhaṇa, whose work *Rājataraṅgiṇī* is considered the most noteworthy historical poem of the language, is present in this august gathering as well. Every major branch of the language is represented through its best exponent in this exalted congregation, establishing the premier position held by Kashmir during the time. Not only is the assembly playing host to literary titans, but also to the leading names in the fields of physicians, philosophers and architects who were present at the gathering.

Pollock builds a strong case to highlight that, the period of 1140CE represented the zenith of the intellectual development attained by Kashmir. He is right in highlighting the remarkable lineage the place boasted of since the seventh century. Kṣemendra, the polymath and author of *Bhārata Mañjarī* and *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* represented the best of the eleventh century. The twelfth century saw Maṅkha, along with his brothers, Jayadratha and Kavirāja, rise to literary acclaim with other creative titans.

Yet, within fifty years from 1140CE, the literary landscape has changed beyond recognition. Pollock highlights that production of new creations in all the major genres of the language has come to a standstill. From being a focal point of learning, Kashmir has become barren. Fifteenth century is the next age during which significant compositions emerge again. The royal patronage issued to Sanskrit by the Sultan Zain-ul-'abidin created the necessary conditions for the revival, says Pollock. Jonarāja was the chief scholar at the Sultan's court and he continued Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī.* The gap in the narrative of the rulers of the land in the epic poem highlights the political and cultural transformations that have swept through the valley. Śrīvara's anthology, *Subhāṣitāvalī,* enlists more than 350 poets of the land, and Pollock (2001:397) asserts that even though the large number of poets enlisted can be construed to indicate that the period since 1140 did indeed produce several works in the language, the anthology does not produce any proof that works of significance were created.

Pollock then inquires into the reasons for such rupture in the creative output from the literary scene of Kashmir. He mentions that works could have been lost in the various calamities that befell the land, including frequent fires in the capital. He touches very briefly on the Mongol invasion of 1320, but makes no note at all of the remarkable transformations that took place in the social, religious and cultural fabric of the land during the reigns of Sultan Zain-ul-'abidin's predecessors, especially Sikander Shāh Mīr (ref. Kaw 2004:108), who went on a spree of destroying idols, temples and Hindu culture in every village of the valley, as documented by Jonarāja in *Rājataraṅgiṇī* as well. He points out that, even though Kashmir had faced a similar breakdown during the late ninth century, it was able to recover and bounce back to produce some of the finest works in the language through Abhinavagupta, Kuntaka and Mahimabhaṭṭa But, he believes the twelfth century is different as the deterioration could never be reversed. Very briefly admitting that "the possibility exists that this picture of literary collapse is an artifact of our data," (Pollock 2001:397) and that, the loss of works in the various calamities that befell the state could paint a different picture, Pollock sets it aside to present his interpretation of the decline. One thus clearly observes a pattern of the author to mention in passing probable causes for the decline but peremptorily dismisses all of them except the one he chooses to focus upon.

Pollock cites particular references from Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of the excesses and debauchery of the Hindu kings, especially King Harṣa and holds them responsible for creating a scenario where culture degenerated. "It is a direct consequence of this, one has to assume, that for poets like Maṅkha political power had not only become irrelevant to their lives as creative artists and to the themes of their poetry but an impediment," (Pollock 2001:399). At this juncture, one must wonder why Pollock conveniently leaves out the patronage given by Harṣa's predecessors in the Lohara dynasty to Sanskrit. 1286 is a significant year in the history of the land as complete anarchy broke out during the time. The attack by Rinchana, the Tibetan ruler who plundered the capital Srinagar, the calamity that befell the whole land as well as the decisive victories of the Turks over the Hindus, all occurring during the thirteenth century and the first three decades of the fourteenth century find no account in Pollock's work. Having ignored these momentous changes as critical causes for the breakdown of socio-political structures in the place, and only mentioning the later invasion of 1320 in a single line, Pollock states, "But none of these possibilities seem very likely." This is a highly contentious statement from the author. On the one hand, he ignores the most savage and formidable challenges Hindu culture as a whole faced during the Islamic invasion in Kashmir, and on the other, he emphatically places the blame on the "breakdown of the courtly-civic ethos of Kashmir" during the rule of the Hindu kings.

The stark contrast in the manner in which Pollock absolves the Turkish kings of any responsibility for the blows faced by Sanskrit literary culture is illustrated through the manner in which he condones Sultan Zain-ul-'abidin's destruction of the idol of Goddess Śāradā. Pollock's double standards and duplicity in calling the Sultan a "pious devotee", and describing the act of destruction as something the goddess made him do, "the goddess 'made him smash to pieces her very own image'" is very revealing of Pollock's methods of analysis where he casts no light at all on any observation, or even the historical evidence that challenges and counters his tenuously built analysis.

Further highlighting his case, Pollock maintains that Sanskrit literature historically propagated out of Kashmir and the lack of any such spread post twelfth century is seen as validation of his argument that the language had significantly declined in quality and quantity during the period. Pollock points out that the very nature of the works is one of "culture reduced to reinscription and restatement". Originality in any of the major branches of literature has disappeared but, continued secondary productions demonstrate the unbroken work carried out in the language. Thus, Pollock states that, as what was lost during the period was the more principal element of creating original work in literature, Sanskrit has disappeared from its once hallowed seat, viz. Kashmir. He does not mention even in passing the revival of the language in 1857 under the reign of Raṇavīra Singh, who is said to have commissioned more than 30 works in all genres of Sanskrit literature. The king's courtly poets including Pandit Sahibram, Viśveśvara generated great keenness for the language once again in the valley (Majumdar 2001a:165) and this finds no account in Pollock's work.

2 'Sanskrit in the City of Victory and Knowledge'

If the first case had at its heart the role played by the breakdown of the "courtly-civic ethos" and the "debauchery of the Hindu kings", the second case has at its crux the "complicated politics of literary language and far sharper competition among literary cultures" in Vijayanagara (Pollock 2001:400), one of the greatest empires ever built in southern India. In holding the rise of the vernaculars responsible for the decline in Sanskrit, Pollock brings a dubious critical eye to the multilingual nature of life in the empire. In spite of Kṛṣṇadevarāya being a Kannada king, Pollock argues that he did little to champion Kannada at the court. Timmaṇṇa was the only court poet of the language while the Dāsa tradition flourished in the empire. Sanskrit in the state saw no new creations but then, Pollock admits that scholarship in the language reached its zenith during the period. The governors of the state too were very well versed in the language and were learned men but, of "only reproductive and not original learning," he states. As J Hanneder analyses in his response 'On "The Death of Sanskrit" to Pollock's paper, "to state this of scholars like Vidyāraṇya and Sāyaṇa who were crucial figures in establishing through their literary activities what came to be considered the fundamental canon of Hindu religious tenets is totally unconvincing." (Hanneder 2002:307)

In a further analysis, especially in literature that was produced in Vijayanagara, Pollock laments that the quality of *kāvya* written was poor and wonders how and why the works from the court survived at all (Pollock 2001:401), after the empire was destroyed in 1565. He believes that the dynamism and spirit seen in the works of Kannada and Telugu are absent in Sanskrit. Thus, in this multilingual empire, he believes Kannada was poorly represented in the court, Sanskrit was only used for State purposes and Telugu was the main medium in which even Kṛṣṇadevarāya composed. Using words such as "conflict" and "competition" between the vernaculars on the one hand and Sanskrit on the other, Pollock seems inclined to build for the reader an image that perpetuates a sharp dichotomy between the two. The scenario - where the vernaculars and Sanskrit thrived, and creative energies flowed mutually between them as against a fight for power - is not given even a slight consideration by the author, thus bringing his motives under scrutiny.

Selecting *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya*, King Kṛṣṇadevarāya's work written in Sanskrit, he reviews the work as one whose theme has been written about before historically with no novel element in the effort and that the significance of the work is more because of its association with the king and the "political narrative of the Vijayanagara Empire". Despite *kāvya* not being a genre in which personal expression has been a characteristic feature of the language, Pollock holds *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya* to a different standard of judgment. The defeat of the Orissa king Gajapati to Kṛṣṇadevarāya and the spread of the empire until the Bay of Bengal on the east and the jubilation that followed this victory are seen as finding expression through the work *Jāmbavatīpariṇaya.* Thus, the work is not a true reflection of the prominent and creatively active role played by Sanskrit in state but is dismissed as a body that is only politically significant. Most of the work of this period in Sanskrit is an expression of the "mytho-political representation of the king's person" and of the nature of "imperial documents". Having ignored *stotra-s* and religious works as significant examples of literary activity earlier in the essay, Pollock now points out that the vernaculars were more active in propagating religious sentiments in Vijayanagara and Sanskrit was only reserved for official state purposes. Thus, it is not the absence of works in Sanskrit that establish its decline during the period but, the nature of the works that Pollock questions, using standards that are arbitrary.

3 The Last Sanskrit Poet

Pollock's third section, The Last Sanskrit Poet, considers three remarkable figures – Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, the Jain poet Siddhicandra and Kavīndrācārya. Hailing Jagannātha as the last poet to have attained canonical status in the legion of *kavi*-s, Pollock laments that one does not have literary information about the life of the poet despite his period of existence being closer to our present time. He then goes on to make the startling inference that this is because "the cosmopolitan space occupied by Sanskrit literature for much of the two preceding millennia persisted well into the seventeenth century despite what are represented as fundamental changes in the political environment with the coming of the Mughals in the previous century," (Pollock 2001:404). Repeatedly, one finds Pollock's method - of dismissing the negative impact of the Islamic invasions on the creation, preservation and restoration of the Sanskrit language in India – as a characteristic attribute of his work.

The manner in which Jagannātha's *Bhāminīvilāsa* and *Rasagaṅgādhara* achieved massively widespread dissemination is never seen again in the history of the land, and his *Rasagaṅgādhara* remains among the finest literary treatises in the language. Briefly describing Jagannātha's personal story - as a Brahmin born into an orthodox Telugu family, who fell in love with a Muslim woman, and died by drowning in the Gaṅgā - Pollock then moves onto the study of the *Navya* age. The departure from the *prācya* style brought with it a novel approach and tone and methods of analysis into the language. Along with Jagannātha, some of the extraordinary exponents of this movement include Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, the author of *Siddhāntakaumidī*, Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara, Siddhicandra the Jain poet, and Kavīndrācārya.

Analysing Siddhicandra's time and place in the Mughal court, Pollock presents Abul Fazal and Akbar himself as men who provided patronage to Siddhicandra and in the process, played significant roles in his life. Siddhicandra had learnt Persian, and the period saw many Sanskrit works translated into Persian, while Sanskrit too was influenced by the Mughal language of the State. While he combined impressive learning in both languages, Pollock believes that the quality of his work is mediocre, and does not embody and express the transformative events of the age. Discussing Siddhicandra's debates with the Mughal emperor Jahangir and empress Nūr Mahal, Pollock speaks about how Siddhicandra was pressurised to give up his celibacy and marry, yet the poet stood resolute in his position, even at the threat of exile; Pollock suggests that this is a pointer to the idea that the prevailing literary and social idea was that "all innovation should be in service of the oldest of Jain monastic ideals," (Pollock 2001:407). Siddhicandra's work and self identification as a *navya kavi* are thus indications of how the very nature of scholarship in Sanskrit has changed; and Pollock interprets this as a definitive end of the *prācya*.

Considering Kavīndra Sarasvatī's life and work next, Pollock expounds that the massive transformations that swept through the society failed to mark the poet's work. Highlighting that Kavīndra's major achievement was the abolition of the jizya tax that was imposed on Hindus during the Mughal rule, Pollock states that the work of the poet remained conventional, and bore no marks of innovation or creativity. Again dismissing the work done in the genre of hymns and restating of older problems in newer language, Pollock makes a sweepingly damning statement: "What Sanskrit learning in the seventeenth century prepared one to do, one might infer from the works of Siddhicandra and Kavīndrācārya, was to resist all other learning," (Pollock 2001:408). Pollock reduces all the transformations taking place in the language - including his own admission in the earlier part of the essay viz. that this period corresponded with some of the most innovative departures that took place in Sanskrit - to the statement that the outcome of the literary era is an inert unresponsiveness and resistance. This is indeed a very dismissive and contemptuous position Pollock elects to take.

Returning to comparisons with Jagannātha, Pollock searches for information about the Sanskrit culture of the age in Jagannātha's personal life, and concludes that part of this culture is "the historical fact of a literary representation linking the greatest Sanskrit poet of the age with a Muslim woman," (Pollock 2001:409). The themes Jagannātha explores, such as the death of his wife and child, and the tone of his personal reference - are all shown as features of the *navya* tradition. Pollock's mode of analysis is not only questionable but his conclusions and inferences in each of these instances of study are labored and factitious. Thus, the highlight of the literary analysis of Sanskrit in the seventeenth century that Pollock makes, pivots on the role played by Jagannātha's marriage to a Muslim woman. It is indeed startling that this is the conclusion the acclaimed Indologist makes.

4 'Under the Shadow of The Raj'

Pollock begins the last case by recounting the surveys commissioned during the British Rāj, of the state of Sanskrit learning in the Bengal and Madras presidencies. Despite Pollock's insistence that Sanskrit as a language had lost the vital force to spread and survive, he admits that the surveys provided information to the contrary picture. Discussing the statistics from the 'Third Report', the survey commissioned by William Adam in the 1830s in five districts in the Bengal presidency, one finds that there were 353 Sanskrit schools with over 2500 students in them. He points out that most of the students in the schools belonged to the Brahman community while half the students in the

Muslim schools of Burdwan district were non-Muslims, with the Brahmins forming one third of this population. Pollock notes that, "The vast majority of Sanskrit students were engaged in the study of grammar, logic or law. Other subjects, among them literature, figure far less prominently," (Pollock 2001:412).

Admitting though, that this does not imply the absence of creation of new literature in Sanskrit, Pollock mentions that, in fact, new works were being produced in Bengal even in 1830s. One is sure to find this true across the country, with R C Majumdar writing about the numerous works that were being created throughout the nation (Majumdar 2001b:960-967). But the standards and quality of the creations were, maintains Pollock, poor and constitute "literary atrophy". While other knowledge systems of Sanskrit, such as logic, continued to thrive with the creation of remarkable material, Pollock also states that the spread of the new creations across the country demonstrates the strength and vitality of the disseminating systems. But, as literary texts weren't a highlight of this distribution, and school syllabi carried in it outdated works, Pollock hastily concludes that, "That the literary texts were no longer inserted into this distributive network – and they were not – must be due to the fact that they did not merit insertion in the eyes of the Sanskrit readers themselves," (Pollock 2001:413).

Socio-political factors such as the termination of the *zamindāri* system and cessation of the patronage extended to pundits are, maintains Pollock, not the main cause of this decline in literary output. Across various genres of Sanskrit, excepting literature, scholarly inventions and accomplishments continued, however, to pour new life into the language, especially in various courts of the Hindu kings. The Maratha court of Tanjore, the courts of Krishnaraja Wodeyar in Mysore, and Jai Singh II in Jaipur provided patronage for the development of the language, and this resulted in a capacious and extensive production of analytical texts and newer commentaries on older topics. "But, how did the Sanskrit literary imagination react to all this? It simply did not," concludes Pollock.

Numerous newer and interesting works came up during the period : works such as those of Rāghava Āpa Khanḍekar in Maharashtra who wrote a lexicon *Kośāvataṁsa*, a book on astronomy *Kheṭakṛti* and the literary work *Kṛṣṇavilāsa*; other writers such as Achyutarāya Modak, Gaṅgādhara of Nagpur; writers from the Kashmir seat of learning such as Śivaśaṅkara, Vāsudeva, Ganeśa and Lāla Paṇḍita; and writers from the southern regions such as Rāmasvāmi Śāstri and Sundara Rāja; all these and more importantly, he ignores the changing trends that found their expression through the publication of short stories and journals through the influence of Western style, and goes on to state, "In terms of both the subjects considered acceptable and the audience it was prepared to address, Sanskrit had chosen to make itself irrelevant to the new world." One wonders why the critic is so determined to set aside any evidence that is contrary to his position.

Taking the example of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Pollock (2001:414) asserts, "Sanskrit intellectuals seemed able to respond, or were interested in responding, only to a challenge made on their own terrain – that is, in Sanskrit." Furthermore, "Sanskrit had ceased to function as the vehicle for living thought, thought that supplemented and not simply duplicated reality." (2001:414). If this is indeed the state of affairs in the country, as suggested by Pollock, one must question how a song like Vande Mātaram - written in simple Sanskrit with a sprinkling of Bengali words, as a part of *Ānandmaṭh* by Bankim Chandra Chaṭṭopādhyay - spread throughout the length and breadth of the nation, and indeed became a call for galvanizing energy during the Swadeshi movement; it was as well a call for fight for freedom, calling upon the people to take up the fight, the ones who had been oppressed by centuries of economic, political and social bondage. It was among the very first attempts at forging an identity of Motherland; and in the process, the song has given an entire people a timeless conception of one's nation as a living force, and in a language they have seen as the mother of all their native languages.

In this context, as Pollock sounds the death-knell for Sanskrit, during this latest period in his analysis, one feels Hanneder's statement (Hanneder 2002:308) holds true:

> "It would be possible to add instances, where Pollock has interpreted the evidence to fit his thesis without considering other options. But let us briefly mention two examples of, if one wishes, innovations: The first is the development of a particular brand of Campū from tenth century onwards. The other is the recent adaptation in Sanskrit literature of new genres like that of the modern short story. One, in my view, particularly impressive synthesis of classical Sanskrit style and the modern social – critical short story is found in Kṣamā Rao's works. It would not be

> surprising to find more of this sort in the Sanskrit literature of 19th and 20th century. One should also not forget that the transformation of the Sanskrit Pandits who came in contact with or were under the influence of the British education system in India, are not examples for the power of 'Sanskritic culture' to adapt and interact with modernity; this innovation was even a necessary condition for the emergence of Indology itself."

Pollock goes on to suggest "Perhaps those who are not inheritors of a two-thousand year long tradition cannot possibly know its weight – the weight of all the generations of the dead who remain contemporary and exigent" (2001:414). Firstly, the tradition is much older than the two thousand years that Pollock mentions. Secondly, it appears that Pollock is responding to William Adam, who conducted the survey in Bengal presidency in 1830, as a man who loves the language, but having made such a biased case for declaring Sanskrit dead, Pollock now takes the stand of a duplicitously benevolent critic. Criticizing Adams is certainly pointless, for it would amount to breaking a butterfly on a wheel but Pollock makes the truest statement of the essay in responding to the former –

> "The love and care of language ('complicated alliterations'), the vast and enchanting Borgesian library of narratives ('absurd fictions'), the profound reflections on human destiny ('metaphysical abstractions') are central values marking Sanskrit literature from its beginning, and a source of incomparable pleasure and sustenance to those with cultural training to appreciate them."
>
> Pollock (2001:414)

Pollock then sets the stage for his conclusion with trying to understand "when and why this repertory became a practice of repetition and not renewal; when and why what had always been another absolutely central value of the tradition – the ability to make literary newness, or as a tenth century writer put it, 'the capacity continually to reimagine the world' was lost to Sanskrit forever." (2001:414).

Conclusion

Pollock is only right when he states "It is no straightforward manner to configure these four moments of Sanskrit literary culture into a single, plausible historical narrative." (2001:414). The reason for this difficulty is that there is no naturally connecting thread that runs between them; and Pollock is trying to laboriously and synthetically create a case for the death of the entire Sanskrit language by highlighting disconnected moments in the genre of literary activity alone in a perpetually changing scenario over a millennium of India. He asserts his particulars, often "anecdotal factoids," as Rajiv Malhotra rightly calls them, and sometimes outright untrue statements, in such an assertive manner even while consciously ignoring evidence contrary to his claims. Thus,

> "in Kashmir after the thirteenth century, Sanskrit literature ceased almost entirely to be produced; in Vijayanagara, not a single Sanskrit literary work entered into transregional circulation, an achievement that signaled excellence in earlier periods; in seventeenth century Delhi, remarkable innovations found no continuation, leaving nineteenth century Sanskrit literary culture utterly unable to perpetuate itself into modernity." Pollock (2001:414)

Pollock goes on to compare Sanskrit with Greek and Latin - two cultures which apparently have shared the same fate as Sanskrit. Greek literary activity met an end when the Academy was shut down in 529 CE; and received its final blow when Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453 CE. Comparing Sanskrit with Greek is not only unfair and unreasonable, one wonders what other similarity the two languages have, apart from their classicism. With Pollock's own examples, one can witness the resilience and indomitability of the Sanskrit language - to have withstood shocks, assault, negligence and attempts to actively destroy it over a millennium; and what is more, it continues to survive and rediscover itself even in our own day and age.

In comparison with Latin, Pollock (2001:415) considers the later period of the language and says "Both died slowly, and earliest as a vehicle of literary expression." "Politics of translocal aspiration" have 'forced' attempts at renewal, he says, brushing into this 'forced attempts' all the remarkable literary work that was carried out in the courts of the Peshwas and the Wodeyars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "Both came to be ever more exclusively associated with narrow forms of religion and priestcraft, despite centuries of a secular aesthetic." (2001:415). While Pollock associates this insular characteristic to the language, one is reminded of recent efforts to study Sanskrit even by scientists at NASA for its grammatical structure and the manner in which it lends itself naturally to artificial intelligence (see Briggs 1985). It is also important to consider here the words of J Hanneder (2002:309) in his paper responding to Pollock on the matter,

> "Perhaps the parallel with the decline of Latin leads him to take the production of religious literature as less indicative of an alive Sanskrit culture, while the religious Stotra is for this reason not a valid genre for him! Whether literary theory is really that important for the creativity of a language remains doubtful. It is a mode of reflection attesting an intellectually sophisticated climate, but it could also be argued that the state of discussion in Alaṃkāraśāstra did not call for another 1000 years of revolutionary theories. And I imagine that not only Sanskrit poets would have protested against the notion that the real indicators of intellectual activity are the professional critic and the professor of literature, rather than the poet."

Pollock then mentions the differences between the two languages viz. Sanskrit and Latin, with the first being the role of communicative expertise that has been a part of Sanskritic culture throughout its history until the time of the British, when Macaulay famously introduced his system of education (see Macaulay 1835) with the explicit aim of ending learning and communication in Sanskrit. While both Europe and India have seen vernacularisation over the last millennium, the two situations differ in their nature. Pollock acknowledges that "the intellectuals who promoted the transformation, certainly in its most consequential phases, were themselves learned in Sanskrit", and this, as against the situation with Latin in Europe. His assessment that those who could read vernacular poetry in India were also well versed in Sanskrit is valid and true.

In his search for the causes of the "death" of Sanskrit, Pollock emphatically sets aside, without any consideration of unbiased evidence, any impact by the Islamic invasion on the state of the language. He maintains, "The evidence adduced here shows this to be historically untenable," (Pollock 2001:416), and has presented carefully selected instances that support his claim, while consciously discounting the works of so many writers who have written contrary to it. He further continues, "It was not 'alien rule unsympathetic to *kāvya*' and a 'desperate struggle with barbarous invaders' that sapped the strength of Sanskrit literature. In fact, it was often the barbarous invader who sought to revive Sanskrit." (2001:416). It becomes impossible to attach credibility to Pollock's conclusions when one reads accounts of the manner in which the culture of the land, with its unparalleled structures of learning including its vast libraries, was massacred under the invasions of Muhammed Ghazni, Muhammed Ghori, and their cultural successors until Aurangzeb four centuries ago. This is not to forget that there were stray instances of Muslim rulers who have attempted to bring peace and tolerance to the land – Akbar and Dara Shikoh readily come to one's mind – but glossing over a whole major part of one's cultural history and absolving Islamic rule of any responsibility of adversely impacting Sanskrit is outright willful misrepresentation.

Probing further with his coloured glasses into the reasons for the "death" of Sanskrit, Pollock enlists three major causes. The first of these is the "internal debilitation of the political institutions that had previously underwritten Sanskrit, pre-eminently the court." (2001:416). The second is the "heightened competition among a new range of languages." (2001:416). While comparing the two cultures of Latin and Sanskrit, Pollock was right in maintaining that those who encouraged the spread of the vernacular in India were themselves well versed with Sanskrit. But now, he feels that the increasing usage of the vernaculars throughout the country seemed to have adversely affected Sanskrit. He cites the example of the court of Vijayanagara to support his case once again. One can easily recount the vernacular poets Keśavdās and Bihārīlāl but not any Sanskrit poet, maintains Pollock. By describing Sanskrit as "the idiom of a cosmopolitan literature," Pollock attempts to present a nonexistent divide between the Vernaculars and Sanskrit. India has always been a land of multiplicity; and having both the vernaculars and Sanskrit existing simultaneously, with constant flow of ideas and energies between the two - is an unacceptable scenario to Pollock.

The third cause for the 'death' is the dramatic erosion of "the civic ethos embodied in the court." Pollock again repeats his assertion that the ethos "had more or less fully succumbed by the thirteenth century, long before consolidation of the Turkish power in the Valley." (2001:416). One certainly hopes that a lie repeated a thousand times does not become truth. Pointing out that Sanskrit had no establishments and structures to help it adapt, disseminate and percolate the changes more intensely into the social fabric of the land, Pollock believes that the traditional networks and collective efforts went into fighting limited and temporary goals. Once again, this position of Pollock seems conflicting with the idea expressed by many historians and critics that there was, indeed, a proliferation of publishing material towards the later parts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the introduction of the printing press to India.

Pollock admits, no doubt, that newer works and invaluable critiques and interpretations did indeed develop during the Vijayanagara period and later; but then, in his conclusion, he believes that the impact of the Navya phase was insignificant as it was "a newness of style without a newness of substance." Pollock betrays the fault in his reasoning, with his arbitrary selection of examples and illustrations, and further limiting to only the genre of *kāvya* on the one hand to the sweeping, overreaching generalizations he makes for the entire language from these examples, on the other. He limits his survey while making specific points but makes the following statements for the entire field – "No idiom was developed in which to articulate a new relationship to the past, let alone a critique; no new forms of knowledge – no new theory of religious identity, for example, let alone of the political – were produced in which the changed conditions of political and religious life could be conceptualized." (2001:417).

Pollock ends his essay with a further belabouring of the same statement - "At all events, the fact remains that well before the consolidation of colonialism, before even the establishment of the Islamicate political order, the mastery of tradition had become an end it itself for Sanskrit literary culture, and reproduction, rather than revitalization, the overriding concern." (2001:418).

The analysis Rajiv Malhotra has performed of this particular theme of Pollock's work in his book *The Battle for Sanskrit* (2016) has been invaluable for its preciseness and clarity. The systematic compilation of all the attempts that have been made over the last millennium to end any attempts to reinvigorate Sanskrit language as well as the focused rebuttals given to Pollock's essay set a sound and apposite platform for *pūrva-pakṣa*. The significance of Pollock's work lies in the stirring it has provided and the clarion call it has given in urging Indians to once again take up the stewardship of the creation and organisation of their cultural instruments. In heeding to the call and rising to the challenge alone would one find a commensurate response to 'The Death of Sanskrit'.

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IFI Team

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